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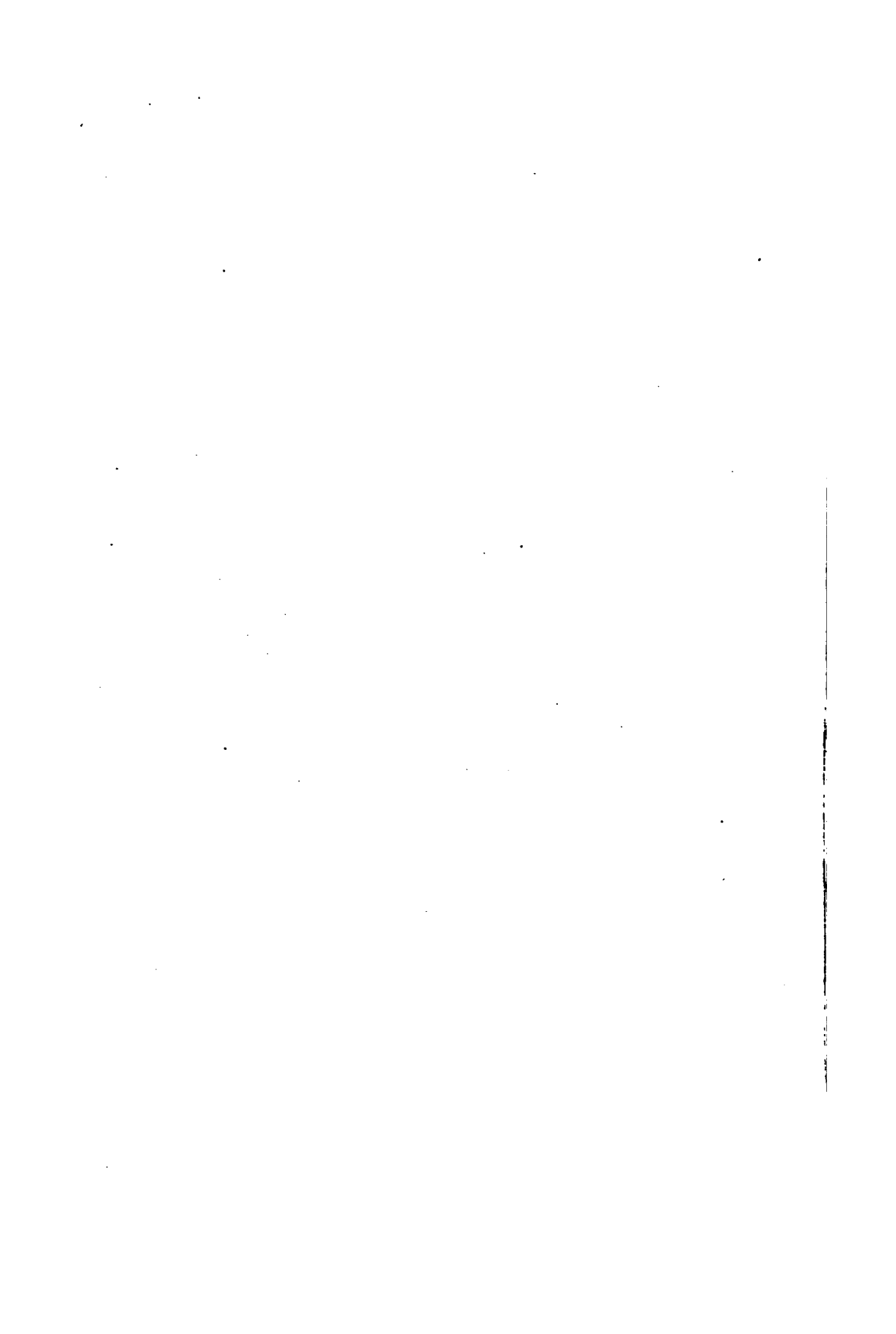
FROM THE GIFT OF

WILLIAM ENDICOTT, JR.

(Class of 1887)

OF BOSTON







52-9

LORD NELSON.

From a miniature by Jackson.

NELSON'S FRIENDSHIPS

BY

MRS. HILDA GAMLIN

AUTHOR OF

"EMMA LADY HAMILTON," "ROMNEY AND HIS ART," ETC., ETC.

*With a Prefatory Note by JOHN HARGREAVES, Member of
Council Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*



NILE MEDAL

IN TWO VOLUMES

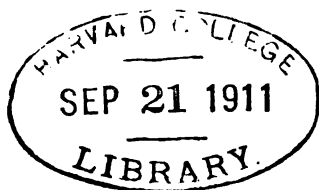
*With Sixty Illustrations, including many
rare Portraits*

VOL. I.

London : HUTCHINSON & CO.

Paternoster Row ♡ ♡ 1899

Dr 2114.9.56



*Gift of
William Endicott, Jr.
(2 vols)*

De mortuis nil nisi verum.

THE words *De mortuis nil nisi verum*—"Of the dead nothing but truth"—were written by the late Mrs. Gamlin in my copy of her *Life of Emma Lady Hamilton*.

This motto has been chosen to face this purely personal history of Lord Nelson and his friends, because it embodies the spirit in which the gifted writer conceived and wrote the book—spurred thereto by a strong sense of justice, which was roused in her by the perusal of some Nelson biographies, written by celebrated historians, and published during late years.

"De mortuis nil nisi verum." The courteous reader is requested to remember this motto when examining the chain of evidence brought forward in this book in defence of the honour of Lord Nelson, and in justice to his memory.

In one of the many interesting conversations I had with Mrs. Gamlin during the progress of this work, she asked me to write a preface for it, and assured me that she had satisfied herself beyond doubt that, although Lord Nelson was evidently and openly a great admirer of Lady

Hamilton's many good qualities, varied accomplishments, and great beauty, yet their friendship was absolutely free from the charge of dishonour and actual moral stain brought against them by certain scandalmongers.

My intimate knowledge of Mrs. Gamlin's high character, phenomenal assiduity in searching after truth, fearlessness of mind and singleness of aim, warrant me in attaching great importance to the assertion of her belief that Horatia Nelson Thompson was certainly not the child of Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton—except by adoption.

Readers of this book are invited to weigh the evidence adduced and judge for themselves, but it is to be hoped that no attempt will be made to discredit the judgment and aim of the author of *Nelson's Friendships*—whose pen is now, alas! stilled for ever—unless more weighty and incontrovertible evidence can be produced in favour of a reversal of her judgment than she has brought forward to prove her conclusion to be true and thus to clear the honour of Lord Nelson.

This work was in the hands of Messrs. Hutchinson when Mrs. Gamlin passed away on the second day of April last year. She had been for some

years quietly gathering material for it, and wrote it with a knowledge of every Nelson letter and document then known to the world, and after careful study of many private letters and much new information placed at her disposal by the descendants of those who knew and loved Nelson.

JOHN HARGREAVES.

ROCK FERRY,
January 1899.

THE sad duty has devolved upon me, as the intimate friend and correspondent of Mrs. Gamlin, of seeing this book through the press. I therefore beg to acknowledge—in the name of my late dear friend—her great indebtedness to the late Alfred Morrison, Esq., of Fonthill, for permission to copy any manuscripts or letters in his valuable collection. Also, I have pleasure in admitting the obligations of the author to several members of Lord Nelson's family—notably Viscount Bridport, Duke of Bronte, K.C.B., George Matcham, Esq., and Mrs. Matcham—for their kind courtesy and help. Grateful thanks are also offered to F. Barker, Esq., Kensington; to J. Hargreaves, Esq., Rock Ferry; to J. C. Holding, Esq., Southsea; to H. Hems, Esq., Exeter; to the Misses Marsh-Caldwell, Alsager; to the Misses Poole, Ealing, and their cousins the Misses Poole, Alsager; to Maxwell Savage, Esq.; to C. Luson Prince, Esq.; to Mrs. Salmon, Bloomsbury Street; to the

Librarian of the City of London Library, Guildhall; and to A. E. Whitehouse, Esq., of the Hyde Park Galleries. Messrs. Whitehouse & James kindly lent three autotype negatives, one of which was taken specially for this work.

I may add that Mrs. Gamlin did not see the Nelson MSS. published in *Literature*, as they did not come to light until too late.

MARY HOLTBY.

183a, KING'S ROAD, CHELSEA,
January 1899.

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NELSON'S FRIENDSHIPS.

INTRODUCTION.

A MEMORIAL that defames reputation, conceals the better portion of a life's narrative, or puts the worst interpretation upon events that admit of a more kindly explanation, can in no way be considered a tribute of respect to the dead ; and more especially to that illustrious dead whose life's sacrifice in the hour of victory must ever shed added lustre on England's honour ; to that immortal hero foremost in battle, and heedless of danger as he carried great designs to glorious issues—Nelson.

The one-sided account given by recent Nelsonian biographers of important incidents in the later life of the great admiral warrants the production of yet another work on this subject, insomuch as it is an effort to refute that which has been advanced to the detriment of Lord Nelson, and materially changes the aspects of most unpleasant charges.

The difficulties attendant on attacking an erection of gradually accumulated inaccuracies are almost

innumerable. Certain incidents in the career of Lord Nelson have attained so firm a hold in literature, although detracting from his honourable reputation, that it seems a gigantic feat to undermine it.

The moral ruin of Lord Nelson's character must inevitably end in disrespect and ingratitude too painful to dwell upon. Too much reliance has been placed upon a work which created indignation in 1814, *The Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, a compilation of letters surreptitiously abstracted, and in the printing of which certain sentences were introduced that reflected adversely on the parties concerned, and which did not exist in the originals; they were, however, sufficient to set afloat slanderous statements, and also to strengthen any that might already be in existence.

Sir Harris Nicolas, when compiling his *Letters and Despatches of Lord Nelson*, detected this and openly questioned them, though he introduced them into his own work. But if he had shown up the other discrepancies of that unsatisfactory collection, he would have placed it beyond the power of later writers to perpetuate such slanders. Instead of commenting on his discoveries, he, seeing they did not agree with genuine matter to hand, contented himself with omitting such lines as disagreed with sentences *in the genuine letters*, and representing the omissions with dots. He thus left uncontested the questionable sentences which had been printed, to the indignation of the friends of Lord Nelson who were living in 1814; and so they still remain, having become more

deeply rooted in the course of time, for the personal friends who could authoritatively contradict them have passed away.

Why Sir Harris Nicolas acted as he did is inconceivable, for he certainly maintained a good opinion of the friendship existing between Lord Nelson and the Hamiltons. The reviews upon his own work which appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* stated that they quite agreed with Sir Harris Nicolas that the relations between Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton were entirely Platonic, but singularly unfortunate—an opinion which should be heartily endorsed.

Following Sir Harris Nicolas came Pettigrew with a new series of letters that in no way fitted in with the current events of Lord Nelson's or Lady Hamilton's life during a certain brief period, though Pettigrew read them and manipulated them according to his own lights, and with what certainly seems like the earnest desire of traducing the name and fame of this illustrious pair of Platonic friends. The press denounced him when the work appeared, and so unconvincing did the letters seem when regarded as covering criminal relations on the part of Lord Nelson, that Pettigrew was accused of having forged the letters himself. But those who knew Pettigrew relieve him of this slur. He misread the meaning of the letters, and as there were some grounds for connecting them with Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton, he apparently did his level best to shape from them a most disreputable story; also an absurdly improbable one, for it required so many adventurous feats and so much unnecessary

concealment, though according to Pettigrew these were carried through successfully without one unlucky accident.

Pettigrew's version lived when press denunciations of it had passed away, and unfortunately more recent writers have propagated his theories with even more vehemence and with additions ; though each intersperses, as it were involuntarily, the reasonable views of those men who entertained opposite ideas to their own, and they quote Southey, Haslewood, and the immediate relatives of Lord Nelson, to the shattering of their own foundations.

An explanation of all the circumstances which have been so much misunderstood and misrepresented will be acceptable to those who wish to know and understand the actual facts of the case. If a student of the history relating to a contested subject, particularly where morality is concerned, finds as the result of his research matter which it is reasonably believed will assist other students in their investigations, and enable them to arrive at the truth, then an effort should be made by that student to shape this matter into a form in which it will be available for use. More especially is this necessary in the present case, where valuable matter has been acquired by loans and in other ways, and may never again be tendered for the great end for which it was sought out, namely *A patriotic attempt to resist and refute the increasing imputations cast on Lord Nelson's character*, by presenting a new history, culled entirely from authentic matter mostly unpublished, but of importance so great that the public should

know of its existence, for it is diametrically opposed to the view of Nelson's character insisted upon by the new school of Nelsonian writers. An appeal is made to the public for its impartial consideration of the facts here presented, so that the scales of justice may be balanced and a hero's name remain honoured among men. Nelson's own confidence in his countrymen, expressed in writing to Lady Hamilton April 13th, 1801, will not, it is hoped, be belied: "John Bull has always had confidence in me, and I am grateful."

The time for that confidence to be put to the test has now arrived.

HILDA GAMLIN.

CAMDEN LAWN, BIRKENHEAD,
January 1898.

BOOK I.

The parentage, position, mariage de convenance, and characteristics of Sir William Hamilton, K.C.B.—His love of the Beautiful, and introduction to the elegant Emma Hart—The Hon. C. F. Greville; his impecuniosity and his hopes, matrimonial and otherwise—The beautiful Emma visits Naples for educational purposes, as the ward of the widowed English Ambassador—Her letters to Greville; her unrivalled position; her talents and plans, matrimonial, social, and political—Madame la Ambassadrice—Three Queens-Consort: Charlotte, Marie Antoinette, and Maria Caroline—Lady Hamilton's Romney gowns; her studies and friends: Princes, Princesses, Duchesses, etc.—A Queen's friendship—War-clouds—Bonaparte—Nelson—The Battle of the Nile—Return of the wounded Conqueror—Kingly courtesy—Banners—Music—Enthusiasm—Letter of Countess Spencer—Incense and kisses in England for the bearer of dispatches—Nelson's need of affectionate attention—Parental pride—The Nile medal—Nelson's thoughtfulness—Reprehensible conduct of Josiah Nisbet—Kindness of the happy Hamiltons to the unhappy and ailing Nelson—Blockade of Malta—Cowardly Neapolitans—Escape of the King and Queen—Nelson as host—Terrific storm—Little Prince Albert dies in the arms of Lady Hamilton—Appointment of Mr. Lock—Earl St. Vincent—Fête and Illumination in honour of Nelson—His extreme sensitiveness—Letters of the Queen to Lady Hamilton—Marriage on board the Foudroyant—Royal needlewomen—Nelson's letter to Mrs. Cadogan—Trial and execution of the rebel Admiral—Reminiscences of Lieut. Parsons—Lord St. Vincent's appreciation of Caracciolo—A notable woman—Capitulation of Naples—Snuffbox for Captain Foote—Cardinal Ruffo—Return of the King—Te Deum and illuminations—Snuffbox for Captain Hardy—Ring for Nelson's Secretary—Diamond-hilted sword, estate of Bronte, and a dukedom for

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BOOK I.

IT was during those troublesome times when all Europe was agitated with fear of a Napoleonic invasion that Sir William Hamilton held the most important post of British Ambassador at the Court of Naples, and, assisted by his second wife Emma Lady Hamilton, did much to help in the accomplishment of the great naval victories under Nelson. He was born in 1730, his father being Lord Archibald Hamilton, Governor of Greenwich Hospital, and also Governor of Jamaica ; his mother, Lady Jane Hamilton, daughter of the sixth Earl of Abercorn, was governess to the children of Frederick, Prince of Wales. As a child her son William was playmate to the youth who mounted the throne as King George III., and hence was called his foster-brother. Lady Jane was a woman of great beauty, and society credited her with winning the admiration of the Prince over whose young family she had been appointed governess. Her son William, on attaining manhood, received a captaincy in the 3rd Regiment of Footguards, and was appointed Equerry to the young King, George III. The private income of Captain Hamilton was so limited that, upon receiving his commission, Lady Betty Germaine lent

him £300 which she would never allow him to return. In after years he used to say he began life with an ancient name and £1,000. In 1755, in his twenty-fifth year, he married a Miss Catherine Barlow of Clarges Street, a lady of wealth and well-cultivated accomplishments, but with no claims to good looks. Her health was most indifferent, and a warmer climate was recommended ; an application for a foreign appointment was therefore made by her husband, and Countess Temple, writing to Earl Temple in April 1764, tells how he obtained it. "Mr. William Hamilton is going to Naples in room of Sir James Grey. Mr. Grenville has done it for him at his own request, and in the most handsome manner in the world, as he says ; his wife has a terrible state of health, and he thinks the climate will do her good." The Hon. William Hamilton was also member for Midhurst when he was appointed to be envoy-extraordinary at Naples in June 1764. Two years later he wrote to tell Mr. Grenville that his wife owed her restoration to health to his kindness in sending them to Italy.

On arriving at Naples he soon formed the opinion that the whole revenue of the Neapolitans was expended on exterior parade, the nobility living upon macaroni and greens in order that they might support a greater number of servants and have finer equipages than their neighbours. His decided taste for antiquarian research had now full scope in examining the volcanic matter thrown up in the various eruptions of Vesuvius which occurred during his residence at Naples. He paid many visits to Etna, Vesuvius, and the Lipari Islands

between the years 1764 and 1767, and the results of these excursions were embodied in letters to the Royal Society, of which he became a member in 1766. These papers were then expanded and were published in book form. He acquired many rare vases and other antiquities, most of which were purchased by the nation and placed in the British Museum; his collection of volcanic matter being given to the British Museum in 1767, and his splendid and valuable ancient Greek and Etruscan vases being purchased by Government in 1772. Whereupon Peter Pindar (Dr. Wolcott) issued one of his celebrated satires, notwithstanding which the nation may be certainly congratulated on holding as its own the collection of so reliable a connoisseur.

Thus wrote Peter Pindar :—

“ Sir William hand and glove with Naples’ King,
Who made with rare Antiques the Nation ring,
Who when Vesuvius foam’d with melting matter,
March’d up and clapp’d his nose into the crater,
Just with the same *sang froid* that Joan the Cook
Casts on her Dumplings in the Pot a look.
But more, the world reports (I hope untrue)
That half Sir William’s mugs and gods are new;
Himself the baker of th’ Etruscan Ware
That made our British Antiquarians stare;
Nay, that he means ere long to cross the main
And at his *Naples oven* sweat again,
And, by his late successes render’d bolder,
To bake new Mugs and Gods some ages older.”

That Sir William Hamilton took accurate note of what he saw is shown by the fact that, when a terrible volcanic eruption occurred in the south of Italy in

1783, he remarked from his own observation of those who perished in the ruins that the males were generally found in the attitude of struggling, while the females had their hands clasped above their heads as if in hopeless despair, unless their children were with them, in which case they were always discovered in the act of endeavouring to protect them.

The following letter, written by him to his book-sellers, Messrs Colville, Strand, London, when about to publish his *Campi Phlegræi*, is eminently characteristic. It is dated Naples, October 30th, 1781.¹

"SIR,—Yours of the 4th September I did not receive till last post. What you say of expense of freight, etc., is just, so I think you may fix the price of the *Campi Phlegræi* at £2 12s. 6d., and if they go off well it may be worth your while to order more copies for yourself, and here the prime cost will be little more than £1 11s. 6d. As to the Etruscan Work, do the best you can for me and for your own honour, but I think no reasonable [person] could object to the price being raised when the case is plainly stated. As to purchasing more copies, certainly I will not while the war lasts, and freight and insurance is so high. I never received the first parcel of books. I suppose all went to Count Firmian, but I will now write to him, for it is hard that I should pay for what I have not.

"Pray continue to send me the *Philosophical Transactions* and those of the *Antiquarian* which as

¹ In possession of Maxwell Savage, Esq.

a member I suppose is given gratis ; the last *Annual Register*, Cook's last *Voyage*, and the new Red Book, and anything else that you can strongly recommend of English publication since I left the country. I wait impatiently for peace that I may make you another visit.

"I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

"WM. HAMILTON."

The above illustrates that Scottish shrewdness which was a pronounced trait in the writer's character. He might with truth be described as the king of antiquarians, and his knowledge was so true that he keenly enjoyed the absurdities perpetrated by self-opinionated amateur connoisseurs, appreciating their pretensions at their just worth. In 1780 he trained an Indian monkey to examine his antiques with the aid of a magnifying glass, as he told his nephew Charles Greville, "in imitation of the art critic, and to skit the antiquaries." The air of deep investigation assumed by the clever little animal was ludicrous in the extreme.

The diversity of his accumulated collection of antiquities is quite astonishing. Take, for instance, the vases, of which there were 730 that had been found in sepulchres, which composed a series in this branch of antiquity far superior to any that had ever been collected. There were 90 specimens of terra-cotta and ancient painting ; 85 lamps in terra-cotta ; 300 specimens of glass and paste ; a very complete collection of armour, numbering 300

bronzes ; instruments used in sacrifices ; locks, keys, antique mirrors, fibulæ, ivory cameos, marbles, gold ornaments, the finest known cup of rock crystal ornamented with figures, superstitious gems and medals. Just about this time he offered to transfer to the British Museum the beautiful circular vase now in the grounds of Warwick Castle, only asking to be reimbursed the outlay expended, for he had spent some £300 in putting it together. The vase, however, was ultimately bought by the present Earl of Warwick's grandfather from Sir William. It was discovered in a lake near Adrian's Villa at Tivoli, is composed of white marble, and holds a hundred and sixty-one gallons. The handles are formed of interwoven vine branches, white tendrils spread their leaves and grapes round the upper margin, and a panther skin is sculptured round the base showing the head and claws. Other ornaments are the vine-twined thyrsus or spear of Bacchus, the crooked staff of the Augurs, and some exquisitely carved fauns, emblems of wine and mirth. The head which has been attached bears much resemblance to Lady Hamilton.

In 1772 Sir William Hamilton was created a Knight of the Bath, being appointed to the vacant stall on January 17th. The following note written by Sir Charles Hotham, giving a detailed account of the fees expected from a newly made K.B., may be of interest. It is addressed to "Sir William Hamilton at His House in the King's Mews," and curiously there is no date attached.

"SPRING GARDEN, *Wednesday night*.¹

"Sir Charles Hotham presents his Compliments to Sir William Hamilton, and has sent him the following list of the Fees of the Knights of the Bath:—

	£	s.	d.
At the Sec. of State's Office	0	0	0
At the Treasury	2	2	0
At the Jewel Office	21	10	6
Officers of the Order	151	0	0
Household Fees	124	19	10
Herald's Office for Supporters	40	0	0
Book of Statutes	3	0	0
Gentleman Porter	1	1	0
Under ditto	0	10	6
Ringers	1	1	0
Marrowbones and Cleavers	0	10	6
Marshal's Men	1	1	0
	£346 16 4"		

In the *Reminiscences* of Sir Nathaniel Wraxall mention is made of Sir William, with whom he was personally acquainted at this epoch, and the remarks may be quoted as throwing some light on Sir William's personality.

"One of the most interesting portions of my life," says Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, "was the time I passed at Naples in the summer of 1779. Sir William Hamilton, his Majesty's Minister, constituted in himself the greatest source of entertainment, no less than instruction, which the capital then afforded to strangers. He honoured me with his

¹ In possession of J. C. Holding, Esq., Southsea.

Nelson's Friendships

friendship, which he continued to the end of his life. In his person, though tall and meagre, with a dark complexion, a very aquiline nose, and a figure which always reminds me of Rolando in *Gil Blas*, he had, nevertheless, such an air of distinction in his countenance, as powerfully attracted and conciliated the



SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON, K.C.B., AND HIS FIRST WIFE, NÉE MISS BARLOW,
OF CLARGES STREET.

From a painting by David Allan.

beholder. The versatility of his character constituted one of the most interesting features of his composition."

Sir Nathaniel's memory of the first Lady Hamilton was that of a most superior and accomplished woman. This lady for some time before her death, which occurred in 1782, was a confirmed

invalid. Sir William was by no means backward in conveying to his friends that he married the lady in consideration of her possession of the comfortable income of £5,000 per annum, rather than for any violent attachment to her person; yet he managed to live decently with her for twenty-four years, bury her decently, and regret her decently—for a very limited period. The only issue of this *mariage de convenance* was a daughter who died in 1775.

Though in appearance slight of figure, Sir William was a man of great muscular power, and that even in his later days. Mrs. St. George, or as she is better known, Mrs. Trench, writing of an escapade of his when she was passing through Dresden in the year 1800, says that he greatly astonished her and a host of courtly people by hopping about the room on his backbone, his arms, legs, star, and ribbon all flying about. This at seventy years of age! From Michael Kelly, manager of the King's Theatre and Drury Lane, we have the following anecdote.

Kelly was visiting Naples in his youth for voice-training, and he called on Sir William, presenting letters of introduction. On reading them Sir William received him very kindly, assuring the young student that he would be happy to give him all the advice in his power, and asserting his willingness to be of service to him. To use Mr. Kelly's own words, "Sir William invited me to dinner that day. I returned, and was introduced to the first Lady Hamilton. The taste and partiality for music of this highly gifted lady are too well known to need a remark

from me. At that period she frequently gave concerts to which all the best performers were invited. She was herself considered the finest pianoforte player in Italy." At parting, his host desired him to call upon him next morning at eight o'clock. He did not, however, arrive until a quarter to nine, when he found Sir William with Mr. Drummond, his physician, and a couple of antiquaries. The table was covered with cameos, intaglios, and lava. As soon as he entered the apartment Sir William said, "My good boy, you were to have been here at eight, and it is now three-quarters of an hour past"; then looking severely at the abashed youth, he added, "You will never be a good musician if you do not learn to keep time."

Sir William's correspondents were many and varied, and he seems to have been in the entire confidence of all. For instance, his brother the Rev. Frederick Hamilton wrote on February 3rd, 1765, a curious letter to Sir William, who was then visiting Horace Mann at Florence, in which he says that "the renowned Mr. Wilkes is about to go and reside at Naples, where he intends writing a History of England. He desired me to assure you that upon his honour he will always behave towards you with the regard due to your character, and that he never means to interfere in the least in any part of your ministerial business or mention you in his correspondence; he hopes on your part to be treated with the same fairness, and that you will avoid ever entering into any details of him in your letters."

In perusing the correspondence strange histories are

revealed, and sometimes tragedies, one of the latter commencing, as far as Sir William was concerned, with an application from Elizabeth Tarakanoff, reputed daughter of the Empress Elizabeth of Russia, by a secret marriage with Count Andrei Razumovski. The lady asked for a passport to proceed to Rome under the name of Countess Bamberg in 1774. Subsequently from Rome she wrote to Sir William, setting forth her claims and her story, from which it seems that the Empress Catherine the Great, then on the throne of Russia, was fearful that Princess Tarakanoff might one day assert her claim to the throne, so she caused the young Princess to be imprisoned. From prison she made her escape, and took refuge in Italy. Orloff Tchesmensky (Count Alexis Gregorievitch), brother of the favourite of Empress Catherine, applied to Sir William Hamilton for information about the Princess, writing in French and calling her a "Personne." That which Sir William was able to supply seems to have determined the planning of the odious design that led to her recapture. Orloff seems to have introduced himself to her under a false name, and presented himself as a suitor for her hand. After enticing her to go through a form of mock marriage, he inveigled her on board a Russian frigate at Leghorn. The Princess was then seized and conveyed to St. Petersburg; there she was confined in the fortress of SS. Peter and Paul, and she died in 1775.¹

Some letters written by Horace Walpole about the

¹ A detailed and interesting account of this mysterious adventuress may be found in Waliszewski's *The Story of a Throne*.

same date cannot be passed over without remark. Many handsome gifts did Sir William send the connoisseur from Naples. In 1768 a most magnificent shrine, which was subsequently erected at Strawberry Hill in the chapel, was generously given. It was of marble mosaic, and was by Pietro Cavallini, the designer of the tomb of Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey. He also gave Horace Walpole a beautiful tournament shield covered with leather, which was painted by Polidore with the head of Perseus on the outside, and on the inside a very spirited battle-piece in gold. Indeed so many bounties were conferred that, in acknowledging another, Walpole wrote, "Strawberry Hill is filled with your presents, and if they could speak 'twould be with my gratitude." He also, in introducing to Sir William a Mr. Pars who had done some views for him of Strawberry Hill, made allusion to the antiquarian researches upon which so much time was bestowed by Sir William above and below ground. In a letter dated October 23rd, 1775, he says: "I cannot content myself with only sending you Mr. Pars, but though you will receive this the Lord knows when, I must take the opportunity of adding a few words. What are you doing? Have you exhausted all the towns above ground and under? Are we to have no more volcanoes, or the ruins they make? What flight have you taken? You cannot be idle? Has Lady Hamilton¹ cured all the persons bitten by Tarantulas?"

It may be mentioned that Sir William's research was

¹ The first Lady Hamilton.

greatly hampered by the suspicious Neapolitan Court, and remarking on the slow progress made by the excavators at Pompeii, he said that those employed by the Neapolitan Government could do no more than a hen and chickens by scratching.

Horace Walpole proposed to make at Parma a reprint of his *Castle of Otranto* by a renowned printer. He wished to use as a frontispiece a drawing of the Castle of Otranto which had been brought to him as representing that structure. When he wrote the tale he did not know there was such a castle, but he found the drawing to correspond so well with the narrative that he could not help suspecting the idea was conceived to flatter his vanity, so he wrote to Sir William, "I do wish you would be so kind as to inform yourself and then me whether there is in fact an actual castle."

In 1783 Sir William Hamilton paid a visit to England, and we find Mrs. Hannah More in that same year breakfasting with Miss Hamilton, when she met Lord Stormont, Sir William Hamilton, and Monsieur de Luc. The lady found the society of the learned geologists oppressive, and has left us the following comment on their dissertations: "As we had M. de Luc and Sir W. Hamilton, we had a little too much virtue, and Calabria, and Vesuvius, all of which were more interesting to them than to his Lordship and me."

Horace Walpole too had his word to say on the coming to town of him whom, in his own peculiar fashion, he quaintly dubbed "The Professor of Earth-

quakes" ; and who, he said, would not be quite out of his element, as they had had pigmy earthquakes, much havoc by lightning, and some very respectable meteors.

The character of Sir William Hamilton was very closely akin to that of his nephew, the Hon. Charles Greville, though Sir William's was the finer character of the two. There is evidence that the same cool shrewdness, temperate habits, unemotional manners, the same tactfulness, courtesy, and elegant tastes, were predominant characteristics of both men. Sir William had married an heiress who was devotedly attached to him, and who had bequeathed him her estate absolutely. Mr. Greville, in 1783, was, we know, on the look-out for an heiress who would accept the shelter of his name, and lavish her affection and fortune upon him in return for his generous kindness, as evidenced by the gift of his name and a plain gold ring. Imitation is the sincerest flattery, and Sir William must have felt flattered by his nephew's expressed intention of following the example he himself had set.

It was during his visit to England in 1783 that he saw for the first time the woman who, at a future date, was destined to be his second wife ; and who, in the position to which he raised her, became for the time being the most notorious, sought-after, and popular beauty of the age. As a matter of course he visited the house of his nephew and heir-expectant in Edgware Road, and there received an introduction to its elegant mistress, Emma. Like one and all who came in contact with the vivacious girl, he was

full of admiration of her wondrous beauty, amused by her outspoken sallies and prattle, and fascinated by the display of her dramatic ability in her exquisite rendering of her famous attitudes, or what we should call *tableaux vivants*. The Hon. Charles Greville does not strike one as being an absolutely bad man, though his conduct with reference to Emma at first sight seems strongly reprehensible. Before passing judgment upon him for his treatment of her we have to consider his cultured tastes, his impecuniosity, the traditions of his position in life as the son of an Earl of Warwick, the fact that his uncle Sir William Hamilton had when in a worse position retrieved his fortunes by marriage, and, lastly, we have to remember his hope of inheriting the estate which Lady Hamilton had bequeathed to Sir William.

This uncle and nephew were on very confidential terms, which is not to be wondered at when one considers that Sir William had, at one period of his life, known intimately all the disagreeables which enter into the life of a young man of high rank and slender means. And Sir William was always intensely sympathetic and quick to feel. Greville tells his uncle, in a letter dated March 10th, 1785, that he hears he is in love, and "I know you love variety and are a general flirt, and of the sixty English, what with widows and young married ladies, an amateur may be caught. Some have said you have had the gout. I say I neither know whether your heart or feet are lightest, but that I believed them both sound, and although Harry Harpur says he was a witness to

the deluge of blood of Boars which flowed around you, I know that your heart is neither callous to friendship nor to beauty."¹

This wily heir-expectant was far from feeling so easy as he would fain appear. He wisely conjectured that if he could send Emma to Naples she might serve as a foil in deterring Sir William from any matrimonial alliance. While apparently considering his relative's pleasure, he had mainly one object at heart—his own interest. He proposed, in a communication that he made to his uncle, to settle on Emma £100 a year, which he could ensure by parting with a portion of his articles of vertu; he was desirous of closing the little house in Edgware Road before he was so far involved as to be unable to extricate himself, and while yet there was a chance of providing for her, as he had no wish to be unjust to her. He said he thought she was too young and handsome to retire into a convent, and as she was honest, honourable, and could be trusted, he volunteered to hand her over to the custody of his uncle.

Responsive to the suggestion thrown out that Sir William should write and invite Emma, that gentleman suggested that she should proceed to Naples, to preside over and do the honours of his household. The young girl was coaxed into yielding to the change by being promised foreign masters for the perfecting of her accomplishments, and told that, if she proceeded in advance, Greville would follow when he had settled his affairs. The innocent dupe was elated at

¹ The Morrison MSS,

such a prospect, and easily induced to prepare for a visit to lovely Italian cities.

Sir William, some time previously, had disclosed his intention of making Greville his heir, a confidence reposed in his nephew to support him in any matrimonial scheme he might determine upon, and had offered to provide for Emma in Naples.

In return, Greville informed his uncle that his next-door neighbour in Portman Square, Lord Middleton of Wollaton, had a son and two daughters, that he had had the good fortune to please them, and had cultivated their friendship. He says, in continuation : "The eldest married last year, the youngest presented only this winter. You know me sufficiently to know that beauty and disposition are both requisites, and the youngest in both respects is beyond the reasonable mark for a younger brother. I understood their fortunes to be £30,000, but since find that the eldest had only £20,000. Such, however, to sensible people might be sufficient for the present ; but it must be an impudent person who could propose it, being only possessed of £500 a year and some incumbrances." He says, however, "I have already wrote to Lord Middleton, and communicated to him the letter you wrote." The lady whose fortune Greville wished to marry became in 1787 the bride of Richard, sixth Earl of Scarborough.

As Emma planted her foot on the soil of Italy, she also planted her foot on the first rung of the social ladder, which led to the pinnacle of popularity and

notoriety. Before her lay the homage of princes and men of genius, the friendship of queens, and the companionship of the cream of the fashionable world. The winning girl who had fascinated the clever man of position was received by him on her arrival at Naples with the extreme of ceremony and courtesy. He took her and her mother to the British Embassy, resigning to them the best apartments, until the workmen had finished the decoration of the rooms overlooking the sea which he had hired for them in accordance with Greville's suggestion that she should have a separate establishment. She was supplied with a private carriage and a staff of servants, and there was likewise a boat placed at her service, manned by men wearing her own livery. *Veni, vidi, vici*, might truthfully have been adopted by her as her motto. From the moment she was introduced into Neapolitan society she won all hearts ; her incomparable loveliness, rare dramatic and musical genius, added to her fascinating manners, gathered round her a host of worshippers, to Sir William's intense pride and satisfaction. With great fidelity she kept Mr. Greville informed of the sensation she created ; she took a childlike pleasure in telling him how much she was honoured and fêted. All her letters denote large powers of observation, and are written with great simplicity. Her extra good heart, which was untainted by the deluge of flattery that fell upon her, really enjoyed the praise which her beauty and kindness drew forth. In one letter she says : " Sir W. as give me a camel's shawl, like my old one. I

know you will be pleased to hear that, and he as given me a beautiful gown, cost 25 guineas, India painting on white satin, and several little things of Lady Hamilton's, and is going to buy me some muslin dresses, loose, to tie with a sash, for the hot weather, made like Turkey dresses, the sleeves tied in fowls with ribbon, and trimmed with lace; in short, he is always contriving what he shall get for me. The people admire my English dresses, but the blue hat, Greville, pleases most. Sir W. is quite enchanted with it. Oh, how he loves you. He told me he had made his will and left you everything belonging to him; that made me very happy for your sake. Pray, my dear Greville, do write me word if you want any money. I am afraid I distressed you, but I am sure Sir W. will send you some, and I told him he must help you a little now, and send you some for your journey home, and he kissed me, and the tears came into his eyes, and he told me I might command anything, for he loved us both dearly."¹

Poor dupe! Greville did not even write to her, in spite of her repeated petitions for "just one line."

But uncle and nephew corresponded, and Sir William wrote to his nephew that, if she returned to England as she wished to do, he would make provision for her; for he had become greatly attached to her, and was wishful that he could make impression on her affections.

Her next letter to Greville took the form of a diary, and covered a period of four months. In it

¹ The Morrison MSS.

she says: "Sir William as took my master into the house, and pays him a great price on purpose that he shall teach no other person. . . . I have my French master; I have the Queen's dancing-master three times a week; I have three lessons in singing a day—morning, eight o'clock, before dinner, and the evening—and people make interest to come and hear me. My master goes to England with us."¹

Early in 1791 she wrote Greville that Sir William and herself would be in England during the summer. She says: "We come for a short time, and that time must be occupied in business, and to take our last leave. I don't wish to attract notice. I wish to be an example of good conduct, and to show the world that a pretty woman is not always a *fool*. All my ambition is to make Sir William happy, and you will see he is so."

When Madame Le Brun, owing to the disturbed state of affairs in France, sought refuge on the Neapolitan shores, Sir William called upon her immediately, and exerted himself to do the honours; he invited her to accompany his party to the "Madonna de l'Arca," which for its originality is distinguished above all other festivals. Madame has left us a record of the fête, and of her own bad behaviour, in these words: "The square in front of the church was covered with stalls containing sweets, cakes, and images of the Virgin, and groups of people in the different costumes of their cantons, some richly embroidered in gold. All the crowd entered the

¹ The Morrison MSS.

church to hear mass ; Sir William Hamilton, Mrs. Hart,¹ and myself placed ourselves near a little chapel, where was a figure of the Virgin as black as ink. The peasantry, both male and female, continually knelt before it to solicit some favour, or return thanks for one ; they expressed their wishes in so loud a voice that we could hear their petitions quite easily. First a handsome man with bare throat came to return thanks for his child's restoration to health. After him came a woman who scolded the Madonna furiously for allowing her husband to illtreat her. I was suffocating with laughter, and Sir William had to continually remind me to restrain my feelings."

Sir William had a small casino on the shore at Caserta, where the guests frequently dined. He used to amuse himself by throwing coppers into the water for which the boys of the place dived. Here Madame Le Brun drew two cherubs' heads on the panel of a door, and when she visited Lord Warwick's house in England she renewed her acquaintance with them, as Sir William had cut out the panel and brought it to England. According to the same lady, "nothing was much more curious than to watch the facility which Mrs. Hart had of expressing in her features either joy or sorrow, or of imitating different persons. One moment she would be a delightful Bacchante, with animated eyes and hair in disorder ; then, all at once, her face would express sorrow, and you saw a beautiful repentant Magdalen."

Sir William, ever ready to patronise merit, partly

¹ Emma.

out of kindness, and partly to add to his stores one more delineation of the pretty face that was daily growing more dear to him, commissioned the exiled lady to paint a portrait of his intended wife, for which she was to receive £96. Sir William eventually sold this picture for three times the amount that he had paid for it, which caused great discontent to Madame Le Brun, who considered herself underpaid when she heard the amount realised. It was at least an ungracious act on her part to attribute paltry selfish motives to a man of position, who gave her, when an exile, her first commission, and introduced her to families of standing. She painted two other portraits of the lovely Mrs. Hart. One is called "The Sibyl." Several ladies of high rank were present when Madame arranged a shawl round the head of her beautiful subject in the form of a turban, one end of which fell in graceful drapery, and the ladies pronounced the sitter exquisitely lovely. In the third portrait the sprightly Emma was depicted dancing to the accompaniment of a tambourine. Madame Le Brun received the command of the Queen of Naples to attend at the palace and take the portraits of herself and her two daughters. The second one, Louise, who married the Grand Duke of Tuscany, was very ugly, and made such dreadful faces that Madame finished the picture against her own wish. She, however, conceived a high opinion of her Majesty, who in the exercise of charity would frequently mount five flights of stairs. One day, while the Queen was sitting to Madame, her Majesty was so overcome by

the heat that she fell asleep, and ere long the artist herself was a similar victim to atmospheric influence.

In the spring of the year 1791 Sir William and Emma, who had now become his *fiancée*, departed for England, the visit being closed by the important ceremony that gave her the title by which she will ever be known



HEAD OF LADY HAMILTON AS MEDUSA UPON THE TOP OF AN AGATE SNUFF-BOX WHICH BELONGED TO HER HUSBAND SIR W. HAMILTON.

while a historian pens Britain's history—Lady Hamilton. The marriage took place in Marylebone Church, on September 6th, 1791, and in order that the ceremony should be complete in legality, she signed the register with her correct baptismal name "Amy Lyon," though the announcement went forth to the world through the medium of the society papers in the

name by which she was better known—Mrs. Hart. In the height of her ambition, Lady Hamilton fondly hoped that Queen Charlotte would confer the crowning touch to her happiness, and allow her to be presented at Court before her return to Italy; but, though personages of high estate exerted their persuasive powers to induce her Majesty to relax in favour of the indulged beauty, still she declined to honour the aspirant. It can only be said that she was right. Chagrined as the bride was by this decision, she soon forgot her annoyance in the cordiality of her reception at the Court of France. Queen Marie Antoinette was most condescending in her kindness, and although harassed with exceeding anxiety and trouble, owing to the Revolutionary disturbances, she contrived to show every civility to the new Ambassadors, and on her departure for Italy she entrusted her with an autograph letter to her sister, the Queen of Naples. Daughters of the Empress Maria Theresa of Austria, the Neapolitan Queen had a much larger share of personal beauty than Queen Marie Antoinette; her mind was of a superior mould, almost masculine. In the chatty memoirs of Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, we find his impressions of these sister Queens. Of the French Queen he writes: "Her personal charm consisted more in her elevated manner, lofty demeanour, and graces of deportment, than in her features or countenance, which wanted softness and regularity; she had, besides, weak or rather inflamed eyes, but her complexion, which was dazzling, aided by youth and

all the decorations of dress, in which ornaments she displayed great taste, imposed on the beholder." Of the lady who ruled the Court of Naples he observed : "Though neither possessing beauty of face nor loveliness of person, yet was she not absolutely deficient in either respect. She is the only Queen whom I ever saw weep in public before a crowd of both sexes assembled in her own Palace on a gala day. The festival on which I was presented to her happened to be the anniversary of the loss of her eldest son, who expired exactly a year before, in 1778; he was a very fine boy, of promising expectations, to whom his mother was passionately attached. The ignorance of the Neapolitan physicians, as it was believed, had caused his death; for being seized with violent sickness and pain, from which an emetic, promptly administered, might have relieved him, they had the imprudence to bleed him, and brought on fatal convulsions. Such was the Queen's distress at the recollection of the event which had taken place on this painful anniversary, that she was unable to repress her emotion. In the Presence Chamber of the Palace at Naples, she stood under a canopy, her right hand held out to the nobility as they approached to kiss it, holding in her left a handkerchief with which she perpetually wiped her eyes that were suffused with tears, an involuntary testimony of her maternal tenderness."

From Sir Horace Mann we learn the curious circumstances of her marriage: "Her eldest sister, Joanna, had been betrothed to Ferdinand at the age

of twelve, but she succumbed to an attack of smallpox while very young, and the honour was transferred to her next sister, Josefa, who, with great reluctance, was to be married in 1767. The affectionate girl keenly felt the impending separation from her family. She descended into the vault of the Capuchin Church to bid farewell to her dead father, whose remains were there interred ; and though at the time seriously indisposed, she remained for several hours weeping and praying ; her illness increased, malignant smallpox showed itself, and Josefa, the bride elect, died on the day on which it had been arranged she should have set out for Florence on her way to Naples. She, in turn, was replaced by her sister Maria Caroline, whom the fates permitted to consummate the marriage."

Of her royal consort it was written that he was so wanting in delicacy and sense as almost to approach madness, and, at the time of his marriage, his education was not more advanced than that of an ordinary boy of twelve. Indeed, so backward was he that he could hardly sign his own name, and his young wife was actually the one to teach him to read and write so as to make himself understood.

Lady Hamilton was welcomed back among the people to whom she had endeared herself by many a good-natured act. Madame Le Brun records that after the marriage Sir William brought her back to Naples, and she became as grand a lady as could be. Within a fortnight after her arrival she was honoured by an invitation to dine at the Palace of Caserta.

Lady Malmsbury, who was present, mentioned the meeting in a letter to her sister, Lady Elliot: "Lady Hamilton really behaves as well as possible, and quite wonderfully considering her origin and education. The Queen has received her very kindly as Lady Hamilton, though not as the English Minister's wife, and I believe all the English here mean to be civil to her, which is quite right."

Though the early career of this remarkable woman was an unfortunate one, she had by this time become fully aware of the follies of her conduct, and had regretfully written, "If my time had to come over again, I would be different." Rightly she *was* different; that she became so prominent a character in history from the date of her marriage is due to no levity or misdemeanour, but rather to her thorough reliability and general talent, and the feeling of the commanders and officers in the navy that she was a dependable character on whom they could with every confidence rely in the emergencies with which they had to contend, when Bonaparte was upsetting the peace and comfort of Europe with his masterfulness. Is there evidence of one giddy companion? That a gentleman so universally respected should by marriage raise her to the position in which she would represent Great Britain at the Court of Naples, and against which action no protest was raised, is in itself testimony that her conduct had proved satisfactory. It was agreeable to Sir William's relatives, as is evidenced by the Duke of Abercorn attending as witness at the ceremony; and of the other witness, the Rev. Louis Dutens,

nothing but what is highly respectable can be written. He had been travelling tutor to the Duke of Northumberland, who presented him with the valuable living of Elsdon in Northumberland, where he proved one of the best benefactors to the district. He gave £1,200 towards endowing a chapel at Birness and providing a curate who should (if required) teach twelve poor children gratis. So well conducted and popular had the bride been during her five years' residence in Naples that she reckoned friends among many ladies of high rank, such as the Duchess Amelia of Saxe-Weimar, who wrote to Sir William from Weimar to congratulate him upon his alliance with "l'aimable Emma."

After their arrival at Naples, Sir William had almost at once to leave his wife to attend the King on one of his boar-hunting expeditions, above which sport his royal soul seldom or never soared. During Sir William's absence he kept up daily correspondence with Lady Hamilton, which, if consisting of only a few lines, were kind and respectful letters, expressing satisfaction at her good conduct and reliance on its continuance. Indeed, he was not naturally disposed to admire light behaviour, but he was proud of the accomplishments and beauty of his wife, and had no objections to her displaying both.

A few quotations from his early letters will show that they contained solid advice which he knew would be received with respect. He always wrote of her as a lady, and to her as a sensible husband older than herself. Take, for instance, this from a letter dated

January 4th, 1792 : " You are wise to see the line it is proper for you to take and have hitherto followed it most rigorously, and I can assure you that I have not the least doubt of your continuing it."

On January 10th he writes, " I am glad you have been at the Academy and in the Great World : there is time enough for you to find out that the only real comfort is to be met with at home ; I have been in that secret some time." After her telling him of a pretty dress of white and silver in which she had made her appearance, he wrote, January 18th, " Take my word that, for some years to come, the more simply you dress, the more conspicuous will be your beauty, which, according to my idea, is the most perfect I have yet met with, take it all in all."

And so to please her husband she dressed as he advised, in simple white muslin and childish sashes, such as her old painter friend Romney had made her familiar with in the portraits of his pretty patronesses. But it was not surface beauty that caused Sir William to make her his wife. He recognised her good instincts and capacity to assist him in his onerous duties. From the time of her marriage she did the honours at the Embassy to the satisfaction of all, and with the arrival of the British fleet her talents were put to a different test. In peace or war she was the mainspring of public affairs, nor can there be given one instance of any reprehensible act of vital import at Naples which would scathe her reputation.

We find in June 1793, the year the misfortunes of the King and Queen of the Two Sicilies began,

from letters of Lady Hamilton, that her time was so occupied by her social and Court duties or pleasures that she had little left in which to keep up correspondence with her friends. She was beginning to take up politics and the study of botany with Sir William, much of their time at Caserta being spent in a new English garden, in which Sir William took great interest, and to which the King and Queen, who were intensely desirous to conciliate the English, went every day. Her Ladyship was also continuing her studies in French and music, and had all her songs set for the viola, that her husband might accompany her. They were a model couple and very happy in their marriage, and they entertained very largely and with lavish hospitality such of the English aristocracy as were in Naples; and Lady Hamilton having the *entrée* at Court, took her countrywomen with her at all times and presented them to the diplomatic Queen, whose one pleasure appears to have been at this period the gracious reception and entertainment of the English. We read of the versatile Ambassador's wife singing duets with the King for three hours on one occasion, her comment on his vocal performances being, "It was but bad, as he sings like a king."

The Hamiltons and their guests, who seem to have included English Duchesses and Countesses, with occasionally a Crown Princess or a Prince on their travels, appear to have dined at Court nearly every day at midday. At one time her Ladyship sends to London for a Dunstable straw hat and ribbons, we find, or she writes for a very fashionable English

riding hat ; for the Queen, whose kindness is quite motherly and whom Lady Hamilton adores, lends her beautiful friend a horse on which to ride out, and an equerry and servant to attend her.

The intimacy between the Queen of the Two Sicilies and Lady Hamilton increased daily, and they even dressed in the same colours. Sir William allowed his wife £200 per annum to cover the cost of dress for herself and her mother, for charities and any other incidental expenses, and she regularly sent £20 of the money each year to her old grandmother Mrs. Kidd—another illustration of her practical goodness of heart and natural affection. The records of her own personal expenses are very simple, and her wants most modest for the wife of an ambassador, even at the period when she was constantly at the Neapolitan Court during her years of friendship with the Queen.

Many writers have amused themselves by making smart remarks and criticisms on the masculinity of character of Maria Caroline of Austria, Queen Consort of Naples and Sicily, without duly considering how her character was developed by untoward circumstances. We find her spoken of by Thugut as "incarnate inquisitiveness and tactlessness." But her position and upbringing must be kept in mind, and the critical state of European politics and affairs during the period of the French Revolution and for some years afterwards. The daughters of a Queen Regnant are always unconsciously at a disadvantage as Queen Consorts, because they have been accustomed as children to know that their mother ruled, without

realising that a Queen Regnant is specially trained to fill a life-long position. In consequence of this imperfect knowledge of the requirements of the case they go into the world with the idea that they also, if they are given the opportunity, can rule as their mother did. The Empress Maria Theresa had so many children, and so many State duties and cares, that either the children or the State were bound to be neglected by her. The children were placed under the care of nurses and teachers, while their mother devoted her attention to State matters, which included the difficult task of settling in life each member of her numerous family in a suitable manner. Maria Caroline and Ferdinand, Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI., were most unequally yoked together, and they knew it. History tells us how dearly Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI. paid for their mistakes, and we can without much difficulty realise something of the effect their cruel murders would have upon the mind and heart and temper of Marie Antoinette's dearly loved sister and constant correspondent, the Queen of Naples and Sicily.

At this period Maria Caroline was a strong, active woman in the prime of life, the mother of eighteen children, and the yoke-fellow of an indolent, easy-going man. It might be said of the King with truth that he divided his time into halves. During one period he was the devoted husband and father, the elegantly dressed, elegant-mannered, kindly, courteous, hospitable King whom everybody liked; during the other period of his existence he was, first

having placed the kingly power in the hands of his wife, the most thoroughgoing gypsy philosopher and happy farmer, proud of his wife and children, his dairy, his catches of fish, and his trophies as a pig-sticker. In 1791 Sir Richard Hill and the Rev. Brian Hill visited Naples, where they found King Ferdinand repairing the old Doric temple of Segasta and killing a hundred boars a day. We have the authority of Sir Richard Hill for the statement that, when some of the King's dogs went mad, he made the whole kennel *go to mass*, and then putting his hand into their mouths declared that now no hurt would come to him or them.

But troubles were brewing for the Sicilian Royal House, and the Queen could place but little reliance on her husband's efforts, whose ideal of happiness alternated between the excitement of boar-hunting and the lazy delight of fishing, and of selling the fish he caught, when he thought the haggling over the price a very good joke. The Queen was an affectionate mother, and great was her anxiety on behalf of her children when the political storm, aroused to fury by that war-god Napoleon, threatened to overwhelm the inheritance of her family. But the King had no fight in him; therefore his Consort was compelled to fight in his name for him, for herself, and for their children.

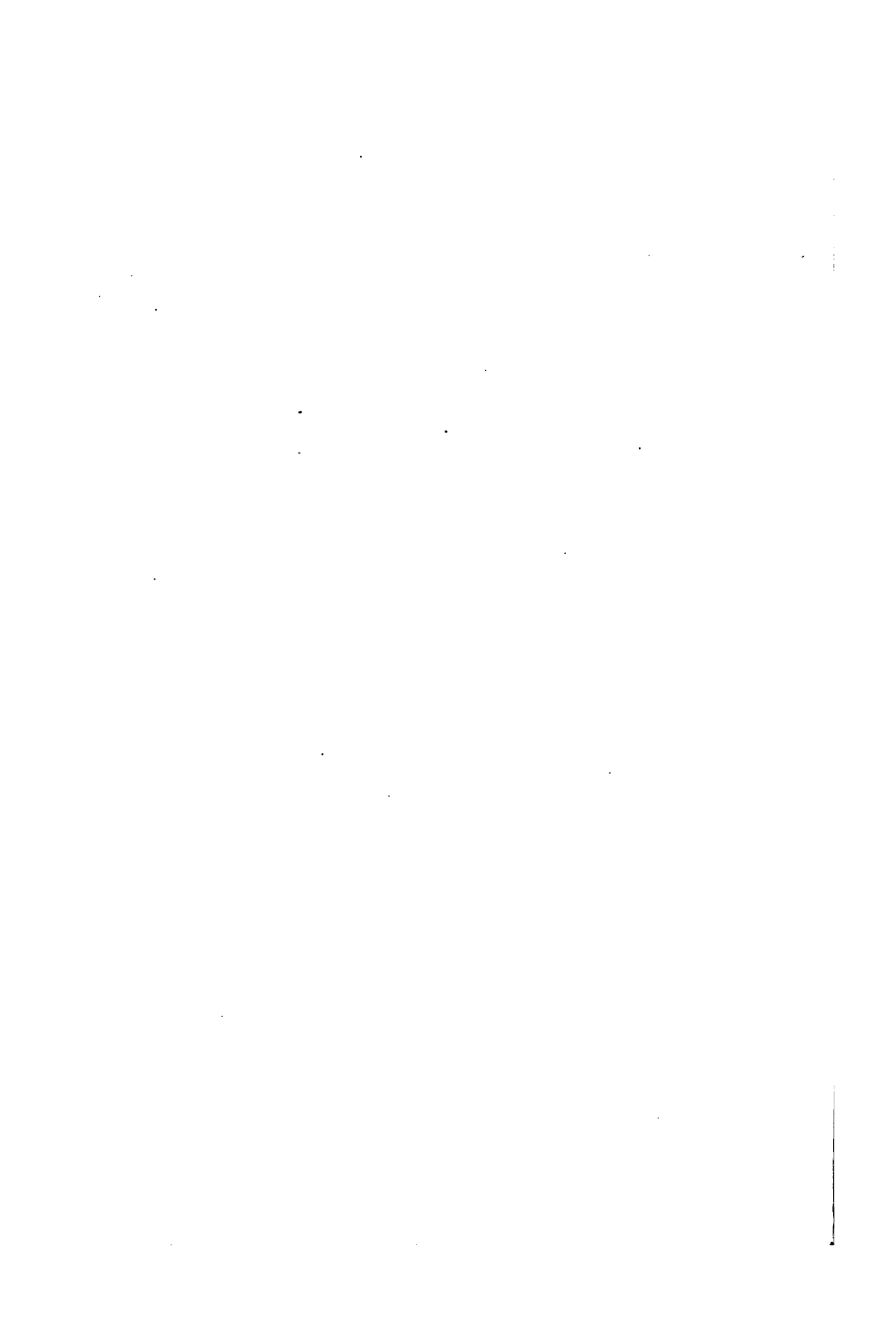
In 1796 Bonaparte's first campaign in Italy took place. In 1797 the Treaty of Campo Formio was entered into, when northern and central Italy were divided into four republics, and Venice went to Austria. The influence of France was spreading far

and wide, and the political equilibrium of the whole of Europe was being seriously threatened, but Great Britain was barring the way, and Napoleon perceived that against the British all his efforts must be concentrated. "Either our Government must destroy the English monarchy, or must expect itself to be destroyed by the corruption and intrigue of those active islanders." Such was Bonaparte's written opinion. From the July of 1797 until more than a year after, we alone of all the Powers were at war with that encroaching nation, which was led and inspired by that mighty and despotic military genius Napoleon Bonaparte.

Naples, and also Austria, feared and deeply distrusted France ; but the British Government decided to become actively offensive, and it was resolved to augment the fleet in the Mediterranean, and there, if possible, strike a decisive blow at the common enemy. It was decided that Nelson should in the first instance rejoin St. Vincent ; accordingly, on March 29th, 1798, Nelson hoisted his flag on board the *Vanguard* at Spithead, sailing from St. Helens on April 10th, and joining the fleet off Cadiz on the 30th of the month. St. Vincent then sent a detachment into the Mediterranean under Nelson's command, so that he might check the sailing of the French armament from Toulon, or, if it had started, pursue and defeat it. Rumours of various kinds were afloat concerning the destination of the French ; all was conjecture, mystery, and expectation. But Nelson was on the alert, eager for the chase and panting for the fray. St. Vincent appreciated his



EARL SPENCER.



unique combination of qualities, and trusted him, knowing that his daring was not the rashness of hot-headed folly, but the keen insight joined to the swift action of a commanding genius. Sir William Hamilton also, with the sure penetration of a man of great experience in reading character, had been struck with Nelson's qualities, believing that he was capable of achieving more than most, were the opportunity given him.

The correspondence between the Commander-in-Chief and Sir William was always of a confidential and friendly character, and in the interchange of thoughts how best to promote the interests of the British fleet, it was freely the conviction of these two gentlemen that no officer was better fitted to be intrusted with carrying out the well-conceived schemes for the protection of Italy than Nelson; whereon followed his appointment to the command of the squadron bound for Elba, the indignation of Sir John Orde, who expected it, and the displeasure of Home Ministers, who would have preferred that the favour had been conferred upon Sir John Orde. History has proved that Sir John Jervis—as he was then—and Sir William Hamilton were right in their judgment, which brought forward the man eminently fitted for the work.

Now in this most eventful and highly important year, 1798, Nelson was to show to all the world of what splendid and heroic stuff he was made. The story of the great deeds of the British fleet commences at the house of Sir William Hamilton at Naples, where, on June 4th, he gave a grand dinner, to which he invited all English then residing in Naples, to celebrate

the birthday of their sovereign, George III. As soon as the dessert was placed upon the table he rose to propose the King's health, and then announced that he had received intelligence from Earl St. Vincent that a British squadron would speedily arrive in the Mediterranean. The news afforded the greatest gratification to the company, as it inspired a feeling of security which they had been far from experiencing. At this time the Ambassador was sixty-eight years of age, he had spent half that time as British Minister at the Court of Naples, and he had been married seven years to his beautiful and clever wife, Emma, Lady Hamilton.

Meanwhile Nelson, who had left Gibraltar on May 8th, had suffered disappointments and mishaps. On the 28th the *Vanguard*, caught in a violent gale of wind, lost her main and mizzen topmasts and then her foremast, and she had to be towed into Oristan Bay in Sardinia. Nelson was downcast at this check, but fortune was about to take a favourable turn. On the morning of June 5th the brig *La Mutine*, commanded by Hardy, came up, and then Nelson heard that Captain Troubridge, with a squadron of ten ships, was on his way to join him; this Troubridge did on June 7th. The brig *Mutine*, which plays so conspicuous a part in the conveyance of messages from Lord Nelson, was captured from the French on May 28th, 1797, from under the walls of Santa Cruz, by Lieutenant Masterman Hardy, afterwards Nelson's Captain, and Lieutenant Gage of the *Lively*, afterwards Vice-Admiral. She was a beautiful 16-gun brig. Hardy was at once promoted

to her captaincy, and she was taken into service for the British fleet. When Nelson wrote to Sir John Jervis to ask the favour of this promotion, Sir John replied :—

“MY DEAR ADMIRAL,—The capture of *La Mutine* was so desperate an enterprise that I should certainly have promoted Lieutenant Hardy, so that neither you, Hallowell, nor Cockburn have any debtor account to me upon this occasion. He has got it *with his own bat*, and I hope will prosper.”

She was the only single-decked vessel in the squadron, and accompanied Nelson in his pursuits of the French fleets. On a vacancy occurring on the *Vanguard*, his Lordship at once appointed Captain Hardy to it.

There was a close friendship between Nelson and Troubridge, which began when both were midshipmen on board the *Sea Horse* in 1774, and it continued to the close of Nelson's life. The first great battle in which they fought together was in that of Cape St. Vincent, on, to use Nelson's words, “the most glorious St. Valentine's day,” 1797, under the command of Sir John Jervis. Sir John said, referring to the *Culloden*, commanded by Troubridge, and the *Captain*, commanded by Nelson, “I put my faith in these two ships.” St. Vincent spoke of Troubridge as “the Bayard of the British navy; the ablest adviser and best executive officer in the navy, with honour and courage as bright as his sword.” Troubridge was with Nelson when the latter lost his arm, and he managed to get the three hundred English

marines and artillery-men safely off the island of Teneriffe by threatening to burn the town of Santa Cruz unless his terms were at once accepted by the eight thousand Spaniards.

Nelson now went in search of the French fleet, scouring the waters and determined that he would as soon as might be come to close quarters with the enemy. The following extracts from a letter of Sir William Hamilton's to Lord Grenville, dated August 4th, 1798, show what had been going on.¹ He says that "the squadron, the King's Fleet, after having gone as far as Alexandria and Carmania, a run of 600 leagues in 27 days, is returned to Syracuse in Sicily without having been able to gain the smallest intelligence of the French armament"; and further on in the same letter he says: "Your Lordship will observe that Sir Hor. Nelson, in his letter to me of the 22nd of July, appears to be very angry that the smallest difficulty should have been made by the Governor of Syracuse in admitting the whole of His Majesty's Squadron into that Port. . . . After what the King our Royal Master has done for their Sicilian Majesties and of which their Majesties seem to be perfectly sensible, I should be the first as his Majesty's Minister at this Court to take up the matter very highly indeed if I perceived any unfair dealings or the smallest neglect in this Government in affording every assistance in its power to the King's ships sent here at the expressly earnest request of the Court of Naples to save these fine kingdoms from impending

¹ See Appendix.

ruin. I flatter myself that my answer to Sir Hor. Nelson's letter will explain the behaviour of the Governor of Syracuse to the Admiral's entire satisfaction, for as your Lord^p will see by Gen^l Acton's billet to me of the 1st of August, a copy of which is enclosed (No. 5), the whole mystery was that the Court of Naples without great risk could not throw off the Mask until it had received the ratified Treaty with the Emperor of Germany with the two Supplementary articles by which the Emperor is bound to defend His Sicilian Majesty in case of an attack from any Enemy in consequence of his having opened his Ports to the King's Ships without any limitation, and that Treaty arrived here only from Vienna in the night of the 30th of July and was officially communicated to me the next day by the Marquis de Gallo ; the Treaty having been finally concluded at Vienna the 16th of July."

Sir William says plainly that the Government at Naples, like many others in Europe, had by adopting half-measures brought themselves to the brink of destruction, but he owns that the French would resent the King's Fleet having been admitted into the port of Syracuse. "Why then should the King of Naples hesitate one moment to take advantage of the present discontent and rising of the Roman Peasantry, as mentioned in my letter to Adm^l Nelson, and march on to Rome, where there are not now more than three thousand Poles and French ? And why does not the Emperor come forward and assist the King of Naples in driving whilst they can the French completely out

of Italy and before they can be reinforced? Why? Because they are infatuated and will not attend to the learned Salutory Advice, etc. . . .

"Altho I feel myself with all my private property in danger of being involved in the general ruin of this Country which threatens it from the land side (for we can have nothing to fear on the Sea Side whilst the King's Fleet remains in the Mediterranean), I am still happy that I did not profit of the King's gracious leave of absence, as my presence here at this moment has been, and still appears to be, essential to His Majesty's Service, nor will I quit Naples until I can do so with a safe conscience let what may be the consequence."

Did Lord Grenville remember that line when the pension was asked for Sir William Hamilton, and later for his widow, when they had been ruined by remaining at the Embassy at Naples?

While awaiting further news of Rear-Admiral Nelson and his fleet, Sir William was sticking faithfully to his post. In a letter¹ to Lord Grenville dated August 8th, 1798, he writes:—

"The present object of the French Directory being so evidently to get money wherever it is to be got, and even by the most infamous Robberies and Plunderings, how can this Government be so blind as not to see that the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies must necessarily be one of their immediate objects and where alone money can be found in Italy? And yet no active measures are taken, and the poor Roman Peasants on the confines of this kingdom mentioned

¹ See Appendix.

in my last dispatch, for want of support have been obliged to take refuge in the mountains, and the French Patriots maintain their ground at Rome.

"They say here that they wait to be sure of the Emperor's support, and as I understand the Emperor is waiting to be sure of that of the King of Prussia, and in the meantime the French are pouring a fresh and formidable army into Italy, in my humble opinion, unless some unforeseen and fortunate event should prevent it, the French will pass their Christmas merrily at Naples."

While confusion was growing thus worse confounded on land, there had been no news of Nelson since he left Syracuse on July 26th. "The Portuguese Squadron and his Majesty's ship *Lion* will probably sail hence to-morrow in search of the Admiral," writes Sir William, little knowing that the glorious victory of the Nile was already seven days old! It seems incredible to living persons now possessing telegraphic facilities that the news of the Battle of the Nile should not have reached Naples by the 27th of the same month.

It was not a victory, it was a conquest, Nelson wrote, for eleven out of thirteen ships belonging to the enemy had either been destroyed or captured, also two frigates. It seems certain that, if it had been humanly possible, Nelson would have captured or destroyed them all; but his officers and men were tired out, and he was suffering from the effects of his head-wound, being almost constantly sick and racked with splitting headaches, which must have been rendered worse by the great heat of the Egyptian sun.

Owing to urgent dispatches from St. Vincent Nelson sailed for Naples on August 19th. Before leaving Egypt he burnt three of the prizes ; it would have taken a month to fit them for a passage and at great expense, and he likewise detained two ships of the line. "I rest assured," he wrote to the Admiralty, "that they will be paid for, and have held out that assurance to the squadron. For if an Admiral after a victory is to look after the captured ships, and not to the distressing of the enemy, very dearly must the nation pay for the Prizes. I trust that £60,000 will be deemed a very moderate sum for them ; and when the services, time, and men, with the expense of fitting three ships for a voyage to England, are considered, Government will save nearly as much as they are valued at. Paying for prizes is no new idea of mine, and would often prove an amazing saving to the state, even without taking into calculation what the nation loses by the attention of admirals to the property of the captors, an attention absolutely necessary as a recompense for the exertions of the officers and men. An Admiral may be amply rewarded by his own feelings and by the approbation of his superiors, but what reward have the inferior officers and men but the value of the Prizes ? If an Admiral takes that from them on any consideration, he cannot expect to be well supported."

Though Nelson's head was wounded he evidently had his wits about him !

Another expression of opinion concerning prizes is to be found in a letter written by him to Messrs. Marsh & Creed, Norfolk Street, Strand, respecting

Mr. Heseltine's questions regarding Genoese ships captured off Corsica :—

" *Vanguard*, Sep. 7th, 1798.¹

"GENTLEMEN,—I send you a letter which you may or may not show or give to Mr. Heseltine. The Vessel mentioned never was seized as Prize of War, nor is the Vessel in our possession; the Corn sold to our troops, which you have the money for, bought into the funds; but no interest by my directions to you ever received is at the disposal of the Adm^{ty} or Secretary of State. The Admiralty Court, I believe, have nothing to do in the business. It was a mistake making the bills payable to me, for she was in Mr. Udney's charge, although Genoese Vessels and Islands were seized by my orders; yet I believe the Captain making the seizure is only named, and not the flag officer, but it seems determined to pester me for my active services, and to prevent other officers from doing their duty. But I will do mine, in spite of the Adm^{ty}, or any man or body of men in England.

"Ever your oblig'd

"HORATIO NELSON."

On September 18th Naples knew that the English fleet had smashed the French in Aboukir Bay. Sir William writes to Lord Grenville, September 25th, 1798² :—

"MY LORD,—His Majesty's Ships the *Culloden*, Capt. Troubridge, and the *Alexander*, Capt. Ball,

¹ In possession of F. Barker, Esq.

² See Appendix.

and the Frigate *Bonne Citoyenne*, came to an anchor in this port on the 18th inst. in the Evening. His Sicilian Majesty went out in his boat into the Bay to meet them, as did numerous boats of English and Neapolitans. The ships gave the Royal Salute to his Sicilian Majesty.

“The brave Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson in the *Vanguard*, accompanied by the *Thalia* Frigate, did not make his appearance in this Bay until Saturday morning last, the 22nd inst., the Day of our good King's Coronation, having been becalmed off Sicily.

“The King of Naples not only went off to meet the Admiral, but instantly went on board the *Vanguard*, and, taking Sir Horatio by the hand, made use of the strongest expressions of gratitude to him for the infinite services that his intrepidity and good conduct, and that of the brave British Squadron under His Command, had rendered to Him, His Family, and His Kingdoms. His Majesty stayed on board until the *Vanguard* was at anchor in the Port. The Royal Salute was given by all the King's Ships, both on his Sicilian Majesty's arrival on board the *Vanguard* and on his leaving the ship.

“The day being remarkably fine, the numerous boats with Colours and Music attending the *Vanguard*, and all the shores and wharfs of Naples crowded with a multitude of rejoicing people, was, I can assure your Lordship, a sight that cannot easily be described; and when the Admiral came on shore the reception the Neapolitans gave him was expressive of kindness and gratitude that I saw affected him greatly.

"Not a French Cockade now to be seen in the streets of Naples, and neither the French or Cisalpine Ministers make their appearance abroad ; and since Sir Horatio Nelson's Prisoner, Admiral Blanquet, has been put on shore on his parole, the French party can no longer deny (which they did to that moment) the truth of Sir Horatio Nelson's most glorious and complete victory over the French Fleet at the mouth of the Nile on the first of August. . . . The state of health of Sir Horatio Nelson was but indifferent when he arrived here, but it is visibly mending daily, and he is now without fever ; the deep wound in his forehead, which would certainly have proved fatal if he had been without his hat that was torn to pieces, is now quite healed."

The enthusiasm aroused over this brilliant and decisive victory shows how great had been the strain of anxiety ; the pressure removed, for the moment the people went half wild with joy. On hearing of the victory Lady Hamilton dressed in a sailor's-blue shawl with gold anchors all over it, and wore gold anchor earrings.

Ridicule has been the portion of Lady Hamilton for her emotional letter to Nelson after receipt of the news ; but why ridicule Lady Hamilton and not Countess Spencer in England, whose excitement escaped comment although she wrote : " Joy, joy, joy to you, brave, gallant, immortalised Nelson ! May that great God whose cause you so valiantly support, protect and bless you to the end of your brilliant career Such a

race surely was never run. My heart is absolutely bursting with different sensations of joy, of gratitude, of pride, of every emotion that ever warmed the bosom of a British woman on hearing of her country's glory, and all produced by my dear, my good friend. . . . This moment the guns are firing, illuminations are preparing, your gallant name is echoed from street to street, and every Briton feels his obligations to you weighing him down. I am half mad, and I feel I have written you a strange letter, but you'll excuse it."

No remark is made upon the wild outburst of an English patriot at home, but no mercy is shown to Lady Hamilton, overcome with joy in the very heart of the excitement. Even Lord St. Vincent wrote about Capel going to England with news of the victory, that he would receive all the incense and kisses of Lady Spencer and other heroines. Lady Hamilton's emotional congratulations will be sympathised with and understood, not, as we have been taught to believe, because she was a perfect actress playing to an audience, but as being those of the woman of grand capabilities overjoyed at seeing the crown of victory won by her compatriot, the great and gallant Nelson. Her enthusiasm will be understood and sympathised with when it is realised that her share in the work for the fleet dated from September 12th, 1793, when Captain Nelson, on board his ship the *Agamemnon*, arrived at Naples with dispatches for Sir William Hamilton from Toulon, which Sir William communicated to General Acton, with the result that two thousand of his Sicilian Majesty's best troops were embarked on the 16th on

board of two line-of-battle ships, two frigates, two corvettes, and one Neapolitan transport. A Spanish frigate bound for Toulon likewise took some of the troops on board. Three battalions embarked that same night from Gaeta. A fortnight later the Neapolitan Government sent ships with two thousand men and thirty pieces of artillery and provisions; all of which Sir William Hamilton informed the Minister in England. Nelson was very proud of the reception accorded to him on this mission by the King of the Two Sicilies, who asked him to dinner and placed him before Sir William and the nobles. During the four days Captain Nelson was at Naples he lived at the British Embassy, and occupied the room which had been lately vacated by the Duke of Sussex. On the morning of departure he invited to breakfast Sir William and Lady Hamilton, the Bishop of Winchester, Mr. North and family, Lord and Lady Plymouth, Earl Grandison and his daughter, etc. From this date he kept the Hamiltons regularly supplied with a sort of diary of the doings of the fleet, and when the efforts of the glorious fleet won the Battle of the Nile, Lady Hamilton's outbreak was perfectly natural.

It was a singular thing that the last picture of Lady Hamilton that George Romney painted was figurative of her future destiny—the character of “Cassandra.” The inspired look upon her face fully demonstrates the grand capacity of the woman to be the confidante of heroes. It was painted when she was in England in 1791, within a few days of her



SIR HORATIO NELSON, K.B.

From a miniature formerly in the possession of Lady Nelson, painted at Leghorn, engraved by Robert Laurie, the first picture done after he lost his arm.

marriage, and was a curious forecast of the great powers that lay within her.

Sir William congratulated Lord Nelson on the victory : " The ever memorable Battle of the Nile—a Battle, I believe, of the greatest importance that was ever fought, and the expected good consequences of which are incalculable. . . . You may well conceive, my

dear sir, how happy Emma and I are in the reflection that it is *you—Nelson—our bosom friend* who has done such wondrous good in having humbled these proud beggars and vain boasters.”

Lord St. Vincent wrote to Lord Nelson : “Tell Lady Hamilton I rely on her to administer to your health at Naples, where I have no doubt it will soon be re-established.”

How natural was the true state of the reception at the Hamiltons' ! Here there was united rejoicing at the success of one whose merits had been discovered, and who had been pushed forward even at the expense of bad feeling. Could they have been otherwise than wild with excitement that their confidence in Nelson was so splendidly justified?

Lord Collingwood wrote to Lord Nelson : “Say to Lady Nelson, when you write to her, how much I congratulate her on the safety, the honours, and the services of her husband. Good God ! what must be her feelings ! How great her gratitude to Heaven for such mercies ! ”

But Lady Nelson, as far as we know, did not exert herself to congratulate, even though she had ample time to dispatch letters before the news of her husband's enthusiastic reception at Naples could possibly have reached her.

After the battle the Rev. Brian Allot, rector of Burnham in Norfolk, wrote to Nelson's father, the Rev. Edmund Nelson, congratulating him on his son's success. And the proud father of the victor replied, in October 1798 :—

"SIR,—My great and good son went into the world without fortune, but with a heart replete with every moral and religious virtue ; these have been his compass to steer by, and it has pleased God to be his shield in the day of battle, and to give success to his wishes to be of service to his country. His country seems sensible of his services, but should he ever meet with ingratitude, his scars will plead his cause : for at the siege of Bastia he lost an eye ; at Teneriffe an arm ; on the memorable 14th of February he received a severe blow on his body, which he still feels ; and now a wound on his head. After all this, you must allow his bloom of countenance must be faded, but the spirit beareth up yet as vigorous as ever. On the 29th of September he completed his 40th year, cheerful, generous, and good ; fearing no evil, because he has done none ; an honour to my grey hairs, which with every mark of old age creep fast upon me."

That Nelson was much shaken by his wound received at the Battle of the Nile is well known, and he was in great need of affectionate sympathetic attention on his arrival at Naples. If Lady Hamilton offered him the adulation due, according to her notions, to the victor, he also received at her capable and generous hands the tender nursing which her truly womanly nature prompted her to lavish upon him. She could rejoice with the officers of the English fleet at their victory ; she could also condole with those who might be in need of such sympathy. When she heard of

Captain Troubridge's most unfortunate accidental running aground of his vessel the *Culloden*, she wrote to Nelson : "How I felt for poor Troubridge ! He must have been so angry on the sandbank."

Indeed, Captain Troubridge played so important a part in the service while the fleet prepared for action at the Battle of the Nile, that his bitter disappointment at the mishap that befell his ship and kept him out of the fray evokes general sympathy. From over-anxiety to get into action the *Culloden* grounded on a shoal of an island upon which were the enemy's guns, and notwithstanding every effort she could not be got off. This untoward circumstance was keenly felt by Troubridge and his gallant officers. After the battle he wrote to condole with Captain Darby of the *Bellerophon* upon his wounds and the number of men killed on his ship, but added that, had his sufferings been fifty times as much, he would rather have been in his place than have borne the anguish he felt from running aground and being kept out of the action ; that he had found great difficulty in keeping from shooting himself, and that even then he frequently shed tears. Captain Darby, and also Captain Gould, who was present when the letter was received, wept.

We can easily enter into his situation by looking at a plan of the action at this battle, which commenced in the evening of August 1st, 1798. On the tail of a shoal lies the *Culloden* marked "aground," and the little *Mutine* close at hand, as if it could not part company from a friend in distress. Fortunately the

lights of the *Culloden* served as a beacon that warned three other ships that were hurrying up, and so averted misfortune to them. As Nelson said, Troubridge was "out of the full tide of happiness."

Nelson constantly wrote with appreciation of his services, closing one dispatch with the words, "His merits speak for themselves." Indeed, he was to the fore in every deed of daring that took place in the Mediterranean during the years 1798—1800. He was rewarded for his services by a baronetcy, and in 1800, after the return of the fleet to England, he was made one of the Lords of the Admiralty.

After the Battle of the Nile the whole fleet unanimously appointed Mr. Alexander Davison sole prize agent for the captured ships; upon which Mr. Davison caused medals in gold to be struck for the captains, in silver for the lieutenants and warrant officers, in gilt metal for the petty officers, in copper for the seamen and marines. This act of liberality cost about £2,000. Mr. Davison had made a large fortune as army contractor.

Some of the men who received no other acknowledgment for service in the great battle than this copper medal from a private individual, when, years afterwards, they died upon foreign shores, made it a dying request that these medals might be carefully sent home to their friends.

Many of the medals were afterwards found by Russian sailors in the island of Tenedos in 1807, owing to an explosion that took place on board the *Ajax* when that ship was burnt in the roads of Tenedos.

In the distribution of these awards, on the representation of Nelson, the name of Captain Troubridge was included.

On the obverse of the Nile medal is seen the French fleet at anchor and the English ships taking up their positions in Aboukir Bay ; encircling them is *Almighty God has blessed his Majesty's Arms*, and below in the exergue, *Victory of the Nile, August 1, 1798*. On the reverse is a female figure, Britannia, standing in front of an anchor upon a rock, holding a branch in her right hand ; against her rests an oval shield on which is a half-length bust of Lord Nelson, with the legend *England's Hope and Britain's Glory* ; Britannia's left arm is placed affectionately over the shield, her hand touching the head of Nelson. Encircling the whole is *Rear-Admiral Nelson of the Nile*. On the edge of the medal is engraved *A tribute of Regard from Alexander Davison, Esq., St. James's Square*. The name of the artist was C. H. Kughler. The medals were struck at the famous factory of Matthew Bolton, Soho, near Birmingham.

The history of Lord Nelson's own medal should not be lost sight of. Captain George Blagdon Westcott, of H.M.S. *Majestic*, was killed early in the action of the Nile. Had he survived he would have been an admiral ; but he was honoured by a monument in St. Paul's Cathedral, erected to his memory at public expense. He was the son of a baker at Honiton, and greatly esteemed by the admirals and captains in the Royal Navy. When Lord Nelson visited Earl St. Vincent at Torr Abbey in January 1801, he passed one

night at an inn at Honiton, whence he sent an invitation to the widow and daughter of the late Captain Westcott to breakfast with him. During the meal Nelson asked Mrs. Westcott if she had received the medal of the Nile to which her husband would have been entitled had he survived. She replied in the negative, and Lord Nelson unfastened a medal attached to his own breast and handed it to her, saying, "There, you will not value this medal less because Nelson has worn it." It was the beautiful gold medal just described. It is now in possession of a descendant of Captain Westcott, and cherished as the most valuable of treasures.

Of his sympathy with the Westcott family Nelson wrote to Lady Hamilton, January 17th: "At Honiton I visited Captain Westcott's mother—poor thing, except from the bounty of Government and Lloyds, in very low circumstances. The brother is a tailor, but had they been chimney sweepers it was my duty to show them respect."

A set of prints to commemorate the Battle of the Nile was drawn by Robert Dodd, with an elaborate key descriptive of the battle which also gave the plan of battle, all Lord Nelson's dispatches with reference to the action, English and French lines of battle, and killed and wounded.

Dodd said these four perspective views were drawn up under the directions of the signal mate on board the *Vanguard* at time of action, who, being stationed on the poop, had excellent opportunities for making observations.

On September 29th, 1798, Sir William Hamilton

gave a grand festival in honour of the conquering hero Nelson, whose birthday it was. The entertainment cost the generous donor two thousand ducats out of his private purse, which he never asked the British people to refund ; but what would have been thought of his conduct as representing his Majesty the King of England in the kingdom of Naples and the Two Sicilies if such public recognition of the value of Nelson's services had not been made? Unfortunately the pleasure was almost entirely marred by the indiscretion of Nelson's stepson, Josiah Nisbet, who publicly insulted his stepfather and had to be removed from the room by Captain Troubridge. This misconduct on the part of the young officer was singularly inopportune, as a letter from Lord Nelson was then on its way to England soliciting his promotion. The annoyance thus caused to Nelson brought on a severe attack of internal spasms. Be it remembered he was only recovering from the injuries sustained at Aboukir, and from their after effects upon his system. Writing to Lady Parker he says : "After the action I had near fell into a decline, but at Naples my invaluable friends Sir William and Lady Hamilton nursed and set me up again."

Nelson also felt he was appreciated, and so commenced the brotherly attachment between the British Minister at Naples and the victor of the then recent Battle of the Nile.

The solicited advancement was granted to Josiah Nisbet, and he was given the command of a ship ; but his mismanagement of it and overbearing conduct

caused his practical dismissal from the service, which was a great trial to his stepfather.

At this period both the English Ambassador and the English Admiral were urging prompt and decisive action on the Neapolitan Government, Nelson being eager for heroic measures, and telling the supine and irresolute King that he must either advance, with sword in hand, trusting in God for His blessing on a just cause, or remain quiet and be kicked out of his kingdoms. The King decided to act. The various influences brought to bear on this inert monarch will be discussed and shown in the proper place.

On October 18th Nelson sailed for Malta with four ships of the line and a frigate, proposing to return to Naples the first week in November. "He," wrote Sir William, referring to another occasion, "is just as eager to do more as if he had done nothing ; so fine a character I really never met with in the whole course of my life"—words always applicable to Nelson. He now made all requisite arrangements in his power for the effective blockade of Malta—the Maltese were in revolt and had shut up the French in La Valetta—and he then helped the Maltese to take entire possession of Gozo, which surrendered to the British October 28th, 1798. Nelson returned to Naples November 5th.

Sir William Hamilton had written to Lord Grenville on October 16th :¹ "General Mack is arrived to take the Command of the Neapolitan Army, 30 thousand men of which, as I am assured, are to march forward

¹ See Appendix.

before the end of this month, the Emperor having consented and even promised his powerful support.

“The glorious Victory of the 1st of August seems to have inspired all with courage and confidence, and we now hope that this fine country may be saved. It is certain that the French Minister has ordered an army of 60 thousand men to act against this country. Their Sicilian Majesties and their Government have the utmost confidence in our brave Admiral, and the Conferences we have had with General Acton have certainly decided this Government to come to the salutary decision of attacking rather than wait to be attacked.”

Again on November 19th¹ Sir William writes to Lord Grenville: “On the 12th instant Sir Horatio Nelson and I went, by the invitation of their Sicilian Majesties, to the Camp of St. Germano on the confines of Abruzzo, and were present at a Military Manœuvre of 32 Thousand Men, Horse and Foot, under the command of Gen^l Mack. A finer army was never seen, and the Gen^l told Lord Nelson (for by the late Gazettes we are informed that the King has been graciously pleased to distinguish that brave Admiral by the high dignity of a Peer of Great Britain) that he had never in all his experience seen so fine a body of men. They went through their evolutions incomparably well. In the evening we had a consultation with Gen^l Mack and Acton in which we all agreed that the boldest measures were the safest. . . . Lord Nelson proposed the sending a body of Neapolitan Troops to take immediate possession

¹ See Appendix.

of Leghorn, and to put an end to all difficulties offered to transport on board his Squadron five thousand Infantry, provided the King of Naples would write to the Duke of Tuscany to allow of their entering Leghorn. The Admiral's proposal was eagerly accepted, and Capt. Gage was dispatched yesterday in the *Terpsichore* to carry the King of Naples' Letter to the Duke of Tuscany. The five thousand Neapolitan Troops are now embarking on board L^d Nelson's Squadron, and his Lordship means to sail to-morrow if possible for Leghorn, and we flatter ourselves all will succeed if the Grand Duke should but be firm. It seems to be the glorious lot of Great Britain to save them all in spite of what they have hitherto been doing to ruin their own affairs and lose their dominions."

Events were coming to a crisis while our gallant seamen under Nelson and his officers were moving hither and thither on sea with rapidity and effect. On November 15th, 1798, Port Mahon and the island of Minorca surrendered to the combined forces under Lieut.-General the Hon. Charles Stuart and Commodore Duckworth. On November 22nd the French were summoned to evacuate the Papal States and Malta, and the Neapolitan army commanded by General Mack marched on Rome. Nelson landed his five thousand men at Leghorn, left the faithful Troubridge in charge, and returned to Naples, the *Vanguard* anchoring there on December 3rd, 1798. The fate of Naples was hanging in the balance,¹ but when the crisis came

¹ For interesting details see Appendix.

the Neapolitan army behaved with shameful cowardice, and the King and Queen saw that they could depend neither on their army nor on the upper classes, among whom revolutionary ideas had taken root; so they determined to fly from their distracted kingdom of Naples, and take refuge, through the assistance of the British fleet, at Palermo.

The following letter is given in its entirety, as Sir William Hamilton's relation has all the value of a narration by one who participated personally in the events related:—

SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON TO LORD GRENVILLE.¹

"PALERMO, 28th Decr, 1798.

"MY LORD,—My last Letter will have prepared your Lordship and prevent your being greatly surprised at seeing this Letter dated from Palermo. Letters from Gen^l Mack to the Court of Naples were every day more pressing to put their Sicilian Majesties in safety, and without loss of time, as the Enemy was advancing, and the Troops he commanded continued in their treacherous and cowardly conduct, making little or no resistance, so that on them there could be no kind of dependence. The Populace at Naples began to collect on the 19th inst., and went under the windows of the Royal Palace and entreated of their Sicilian Majesties not to abandon Naples, but to point out to them the Traitors and Jacobins and they would immediately do justice by dispatching them; and that their Majesties would be perfectly safe under their

¹ In possession of J. C. Holding, Esq., Southsea.

protection in spite of the ill behaviour of the Army. The Mob was calmed for that night, but the next morning a French emigrant under British protection was taken out of a boat just as he was going to embark and inhumanly butchered by the mob, and having tied a rope round his leg they dragged him through the dirt under the windows of the Royal Palace and show'd him to the King of Naples, who expressed to them the greatest indignation on the occasion, and severe orders were immediately given to disperse the mob and prevent such unjust cruelty.

"The Court had already concerted with Lord Nelson and me as to their escape into Sicily, and it was plain that they could not trust to their own Ships, on board of which there were many officers and men supposed to be disaffected ; and, indeed, seamen could not be found to man even one of His Sicilian Majesty's Ships without Lord Nelson's help.

"It was impossible to prevent a suspicion getting abroad of the intention of the Royal Family to make their escape, and it was evident that Lord Nelson's Ship alone cou'd effectuate that escape ; however, the secret was so well kept that we continued to get their Majesties' Treasure in Jewells and Money to a very considerable amount on board His Majesty's Ship the *Vanguard* the 20th of Decr, and Lord Nelson went the next night, the 21st, at 9 O'Clock, by a Secret Passage into the Palace, and brought off in his boats their Sicilian Majesties and all the Royal Family, with Genl Acton, Prince Belmonte, Prince and Princess Castalcicala, and some other principal officers of the Court, and



FERDINAND IV. AND MARIA CAROLINE, KING AND QUEEN OF THE
TWO SICILIES.

lodged them, notwithstanding a heavy sea and fresh wind, safely in the *Vanguard*. It was not discovered at Naples till very late at night that their Sicilian Majesties had escaped. Lord Nelson had already concerted that the Portuguese Ships under his command should accommodate any of the Cardinals, Foreign Ministers or Officers belonging to the Court of Naples when it should become necessary to leave Naples to prevent their falling into the hands of the approaching Enemy. And your Lordship may well imagine that they lost no time in getting on board of those Ships as soon as it was known that their Sicilian Majesties were actually on board the *Vanguard*. Lord Nelson had likewise given timely notice through my channel that the Three Transport Victuallers were ordered to receive the Gentlemen of the British Factory, or any of His Majesty's Subjects and their most valuable effects in case of necessity. I had likewise taken the precaution to freight Two Greek Polaccas for the French and Corsican Emigrants under His Majesty's protection, all of which got safe on board, one or two slightly wounded by the Neapolitan mob the 20th of Dec^r.

"The Imperial Ambassador, Lady Hamilton, and myself were most kindly and hospitably received by Lord Nelson on board the *Vanguard*, and the Russian Minister and his Family are on board one of the Portuguese Ships.

"On the 22nd numerous boats with Neapolitan Nobility and others with the lower class came alongside the *Vanguard* to entreat of His Sicilian Majesty to

return to Naples ; but His Majesty did not speak himself to any one but to the Cardinal Zurlo, Archbishop of Naples, whom he assured that he by no means meant to abandon Naples, but that circumstances of the times obliged His M^y to remove with His R. Family to another part of his dominions, that if the Neapolitans behaved as loyal subjects they had force enough in hand to repel the Enemy, and when he saw that they did their duty H. Majesty and R. Family would return with pleasure to the Capital.¹

“All his Sicilian Majesty's Ships of War had been for several days before drawn out of the Mole of Naples and order'd to be fitted out directly for Sea, but the *Samnite* alone of 74 guns was in any readiness to accompany the Royal Family, nor could she have sailed without a supply of British Seamen from the *Vanguard*. Lord Nelson, ever anxious in executing his instructions to the utmost, told the King of Naples' family that he was most happy in having fulfilled that essential part of instructions which he had received from his Royal Master, by giving every assistance to Their Sicilian Majesties and Royal Family, yet that he cou'd not consistently with the good of the common cause allow of such a considerable naval force being left to the chance of falling into the hands of the Enemy, and consequently that it would be absolutely necessary to burn such of the ships as cou'd not immediately

¹ Contemptible coward ! To leave his subjects to face the approaching enemy, to fight to retain his kingdom for him, and if successful he promised that with pleasure he would return to them when the heat of the battle was over !

sail with his Majesty. Lord Nelson seeing that this resolution, however necessary, gave pain to H. S. M., proposed delaying it to the last moment; but, on the other hand, the Royal Family being very impatient to get off, it was agreed on all sides that the Portuguese Ships and His Majesty's Frigate the *Alcmene*, Capt. Hope, shou'd remain in the Bay of Naples to assist in fitting out as many of His Sicilian Majesty's Ships as possible before the Enemy shou'd arrive, and to burn them in the last extremity. One of His Sicilian Majesty's Ships of the Line in the Port of Castelmare was sunk by Her Sicilian Majesty's order before we left the Bay of Naples.

"On Sunday the 23rd of Dec., in the Evening, the *Vanguard* (with a richer cargo on board than ever was ventured before in one bottom) sailed from the Bay of Naples, accompanied by the *Samnite*, British Victualling Transport, and other kind of Vessels, with the Emigrants and Effects of the Neapolitan Nobility attending upon the Royal Family. On the 24th we met with so violent a gale of wind, accompanied with hail, that Lord Nelson himself says he had never met with one of the like violence in his 30 years' service. It fortunately did not last long, but your Lord^p may imagine that it was a serious moment, as all the top sails of the *Vanguard* were ript into rags, and even the precaution taken to get at the axes to cut away the masts—and in three hours' time new Sails were furled and everything in the best order. Thank God, all ended well, and on the 25th at night the *Vanguard* was safely moored in the Mole at

Palermo, close alongside of the Two Spanish Ships that were so long blocked up at Trieste.

"On the morning of Christmas Day, before we got into Palermo, one of Their Sicilian Majesties' Sons, Prince Albert, ten years of age, either from fright or fatigue, was taken with violent and repeated convulsive fits, and unfortunately died in one of them in Lady Hamilton's arms, the Queen and Princesses and women attendants being [*from fright* erased] in such confusion as to be incapable of affording any assistance to the Prince. Your Lordship may well imagine the Situation of the unfortunate Royal Family at this moment. The Queen is inconsolable, but Her Majesty and all the Royal Family seem truly sensible of Lord Nelson's and our exertions to assist them to our utmost under their severe and accumulated misfortunes. The *Vanguard* and Neapolitan Ship the *Samnite* were the only two that got into the Port of Palermo that night, but on the 27th one of the English Transports and one of the Greek Vessels with French Emigrants on board came into the Port. The rest of the dispersed Convoy is supposed to have got into the Port of Messina. The Sicilians are so enraged against the French that this Government does not think it safe for the Emigrants to come on shore, and I am [was] preparing to send them with a Neapolitan Convoy to Trieste. Since Lord Minto left these unfortunate Emigrants under my care, I have constantly endeavoured to afford them every protection and assistance in my power, according to the gracious intention of the King our Royal Master, and I shall

certainly not neglect them in their present great distress. I hope they may all be soon safely convey'd to Trieste or some other safe part of his Imperial Majesty's Dominions. The Sicilians appear to be very happy in having the King and Royal Family in their Capital, and vow vengeance on the French. We have not had as yet any news from Naples. All seems to depend upon the Emperor's Army having or not having marched into Italy, but as the French invading Army was supposed to be at Fondi when their Sicilian Majesties left Naples, and Gen' Mack's army made little or no resistance, it is most probable that by this time they may have joined the Neapolitan mob and be plundering the rich City of Naples. I flatter myself your Lordship will excuse my having only set down the heads of so many extraordinary events that have taken place rapidly in such short space of a few days. That a fine army of near fifty Thousand effective men should be reduced to twenty Thousand without coming into what cou'd be called an action is beyond example. Gen' Mack came from Capua on the 22nd of Dec. on board the *Vanguard* in the most desperate situation of mind, assuring their Sicilian Majesties that the only consolation he felt was that of seeing their Majties and August Family in safety on board Lord Nelson's ship ; that he would return to the remnant of his Army at Capua, consisting of little more than 12 thousand men, and on which he had little dependence, as every day he had discover'd fresh Treachery in the Officers, and the behaviour of men continued to be cowardly in the extreme. The six thousand Neapolitan Troops

transported by Lord Nelson to Leghorn were at Leghorn the 21st of Dec^r, but Gen^l Mack said he had received accounts of the French having entered the Tuscan State. By the last accounts from Malta there is every reason to hope that the French garrison near the Valette is so reduced as to be on the point of surrendering to Capt. Ball of the *Alex^r*.

"I have the honor to be, etc.

"P.S.—I have received from Malta a Letter dated Tigre off Malta, Dec. 11th, 1798, in which Sir Sidney Smith tells me that he left England the 15th of Nov^r, and arrived at Gibraltar the eighth day, and having staid four with L^d St. Vincent arrived at Malta the 26th day since his departure from England, having been only 21 days under sail, and that the night of the date of his letter he proposed sailing for Constantinople.

"I have the honor of enclosing a few of the Queen of Naples' last letters to Lady Hamilton, which strongly express the strength of her Majesty's mind and the perfect and grateful confidence the Royal Family had in the protection of His Majesty's Squadron under the command of the Humane and brave Lord Nelson during their heavy distresses."

"Lord Nelson," says Sir William in a letter dated January 7th, 1799, "is indefatigable in pushing on with vigor and activity the blockades of Malta and Alexandria, and at the same time affording every assistance and protection in the power of His Majesty's Squadron under His L^p's command to the Courts

of Sicily and Tuscany, and it really seems as if Great Britain alone dared to look the proud perfidious Enemy in the face." And in a letter from Palermo,¹ March 7th, 1799, he writes to Lord Grenville: "I have the honor of inclosing the *Palermo Gazette*, in which your Lordship will see the account of Lord Nelson's being honored with the freedom of this city, as mentioned in my last."

Thus we see this energetic champion of the distressed was appreciated by those who knew him intimately, and by those whom he was bent on protecting to the utmost of his ability. When on shore Nelson lived with the Hamiltons, sharing expenses, contributing, indeed, more than his share to the general fund.

Sir William Hamilton, on August 8th, 1798, had asked that a Consul should be appointed by Great Britain at Naples, and in compliance with the request Mr. Charles Lock had not long before this period been sent out in that capacity to relieve the exemplary British Ambassador of the onerous voluntary labours he had undertaken in the absence of the requisite Consul. A letter from the Duke of Richmond, Mr. Lock's uncle by marriage, dated November 10th, 1798,² introduced him to Sir William as a man of promise. In later days, when Lady Hamilton was making strenuous efforts to obtain a pension, she had a remark to make upon that bestowed upon Mr. Lock's widow, and the earning of it, as will be told when that part of the story is reached.

¹ See Appendix.

² See Appendix.

Lady Elizabeth Foster sent Lady Hamilton a complimentary letter by Mrs. Lock, in which she duly honours her courage in that period of peril. "This letter will be given you by Mrs. Lock, and whilst I request of you to show every attention in your power to Mr. and Mrs. Lock, whom you will find most uncommonly amiable and pleasing and a very valuable acquisition to you, forgive me if I cannot help availing myself of the same opportunity to express to you the universal tribute of praise and admiration which is paid to the very great courage and feeling which you have shown on the late melancholy occasion"¹ (the flight from Naples).

Earl St. Vincent interested himself in the comfortable settlement of this young couple, and for this purpose he addressed himself to Lady Hamilton :—

"ROSIA HOUSE, GIBRALTAR, 1st Jan^y, 1799.

"I also beg leave to interest you in favour of Mrs. Lock, a daughter of the Duchess of Leinster by Mr. Ogilvie. Her Husband is appointed Consul at Naples, which may occasion some difficulty in bringing her forward unless the etiquette is altered touching Consuls. God bless you, my dear Madam, and be assured I always am your Ladyship's truly affectionate

"ST. VINCENT."

A later letter shows that the kind-hearted woman has executed his commission, for the Earl thanks her for her kindness to Mrs. Lock. It may be noted

¹ The Morrison MSS.

that St. Vincent uses the word "affectionate," yet who would ascribe a wrong construction? Some years later Nelson's signal mate on the *Foudroyant* wrote his reminiscences, and remarked that Lady Hamilton was liked by every officer in the fleet *except Captain Nisbet, Lady Nelson's son*, little thinking that such testimony would ever be of value.

It will not be out of place to say a few words here about this noble man, this fine seaman, this staunch friend of Nelson's—Earl St. Vincent. Sir John Jervis, Earl St. Vincent, K.B., was indeed one of Nelson's best and staunchest friends during the historical period of his splendid career. They had many traits in common; both were equally brave and fearless, but Nelson was quicker to seize and pursue an advantage, being able, by a quick flash of imaginative insight, not only to see exactly what was the best course to adopt, but also to inspire, on the instant, those about him with absolute faith in his forecast of victory. Sir John Jervis was, without doubt, equally capable, but he possessed, and not unnaturally when one considers his descent, a judicial mind, and was in consequence much more cautious than Nelson. His thoughts and utterances and movements were stately and sure, being founded on reason and not on mere impulse; therefore Nelson was justified in writing proudly to his wife from the Mediterranean: "Sir John Jervis has such an opinion of my conduct, that he is using every influence, both public and private, with Lord Spencer for my continuance on this station; and I am certain you must feel the superior pleasure of knowing that my

integrity and plainness of conduct are the cause of my being kept from you, to the receiving me as a person whom no commander-in-chief would wish to keep under his flag. Sir John was a perfect stranger to me, therefore I feel the more flattered."

Nelson was justified in feeling flattered when one considers what the expressed appreciation, personal and professional, of a man in the position and with the determination of Sir John Jervis might mean. His sympathetic appreciation of Nelson's genius was true and sure and fearless, and untainted by jealousy. For instance, when, during the battle off Cape St. Vincent, February 14th, 1797, Jervis had succeeded in detaching eight of the enemies' sail from the rest, and the Spanish admiral meant to wear round and rejoin, Nelson, without waiting for orders from the Commander-in-Chief, frustrated promptly the Spaniard's manœuvre. "He is right," said the just Sir John Jervis. "Nelson sees most of the game; hoist the signal to follow Nelson." Jervis achieved this victory with fifteen sail against twenty-seven. He took four ships of the line, of which Nelson, sword in hand, boarded two, one of them the *San Josef*, where he received the sword of the Spanish admiral on the quarter-deck. A fortnight afterwards the fleet arrived at Lisbon, where Nelson received the Order of the Bath and hoisted his flag as Rear-Admiral of the Blue.

On June 23rd Sir John was created Earl St. Vincent, with a pension of £3,000 per annum. He had married in 1783 his cousin Martha, daughter of Lord Chief Baron Parker, after a courtship of thirty years, a court-



JOHN JERVIS, EARL OF ST. VINCENT.

From an engraving of the painting by Hoppner.

ship that was characteristic of the grim determination of the man. Nelson knew that he might safely pour out his feelings to his friend on subjects official and personal. For instance, just after his arrival at Palermo

he heard from Earl St. Vincent that Sir Sidney Smith had been sent out by the Home Government and was to act with his brother, Mr. Spencer Smith, diplomatically in the Levant, and was at the same time to be the senior naval officer there. There was misunderstanding as to the Government's exact meaning, and Nelson conceived that this junior officer was to be independent of his authority in a command which he considered to be his own, so he at once asked to be relieved.

In his letter on the subject to St. Vincent he wrote as to a friend to whom he could say what he felt freely, but in his letter to Earl Spencer he wrote in a more guarded and official manner. The difficulty was smoothed away according to Nelson's wishes; meanwhile he was actively engaged in the blockading of Malta and the reduction of Naples. Sir William Hamilton writes on June 5th, 1799¹: "Lord Nelson has assembled in this Bay all the ships of his Squadron, where I suppose they will remain until his Lordship shall have some tidings of the Enemy's Fleets from Lord St. Vincent, and for which we are anxiously waiting. . . . It is amazing with what expedition Lord Nelson collected his force here (including three of the Portuguese Ships) of 11 Sail of Line, the *Harlem*, the *Lion*, and several Frigates, having left the *Sea Horse*, a Bomb Ketch, and several armed Vessels to protect the Islands in the Bay of Naples that continue loyal to their Sovereign. The *Alex*^r and *Goliath* have also been sent back to continue the Blockade of Malta. . . . The French have evacuated

¹ See Appendix.

the Cities of Rome, Naples, and Prsidio of Tuscany, probably owing to the great and continued successes of the Imperial Troops, Austrians, and Russians in Italy. Four hundred French Troops have, however, remained in the Castle of St. Elmo at Naples."

Sir William tells us that the King's Birthday was celebrated "to the heart's content of all His Sicilian Majesty's good and loyal Subjects, and indeed to the satisfaction of every well thinking Neapolitan or Sicilian in Palermo. . . . I had the honour of having Lord Nelson and all the principal officers of His Lordship's Squadron at my Table to dine and drink the healths of His Majesty and the Royal Family (whom may God long preserve!), and His Sicilian Majesty having heard that Lord Nelson intended to give a Fête or Ball in the Evening on board the *Vanguard* in honour of the day, desired as a particular favour His Lordship to permit Him to give a public demonstration of his gratitude and attachment to the King by allowing Him to give such a Fete and Illuminations at the Royal Palace, and to which His Majesty invited all the King's Subjects of Distinction now at Palermo, and every officer of the Squadron whose duty did not require their particular attendance on board of their ships. Nothing could exceed the brilliancy of the Fête nor the abundance of refreshments except the very particular attentions that their Sicilian Majesties and Royal Family themselves were pleased to show to every one of Their British Guests." He goes on to say: "I cannot think of profitting of His Majesty's gracious permission to return home whilst

I feel my presence here necessary for His Majesty's Service, altho' I am much worn and my private affairs in South Wales are suffering by my long absence. The satisfaction I feel in doing to the utmost of my ability my duty to my King and to my Country at such a critical moment amply repays me for all personal inconveniency."

Poor Sir William! His self-sacrifice met with but scanty recognition and no thanks from those whom he so faithfully represented. To his nephew Charles Greville he confided: "I am really in want of repose, having had for these six years past the whole load of business on my hands, and since the arrival of the British Fleet in the Mediterranean my labours have been doubled, and I feel age creeping upon me, but I will bear up as long and as well as I can and not give up as my father did twenty years before he died, calling himself a dying man, and so we all are."¹

On June 16th, 1799, Sir William writes:² "His Sicilian Majesty requested of Lord Nelson to present himself before Naples with the whole of the Squadron under His Lordship's Command, and to take with him the Hereditary Prince of the Two Sicilies on board the *Foudroyant*, in which Ship His Lordship's Flag is now flying, by which His Majesty flattered himself that the General attack of the City of Naples to take place on the 17th inst. cou'd not fail of Success. Lord Nelson having consented to show at least for a short time His Majesty's Squadron in the Bay of Naples at so interesting a moment, although he could not

¹ The Morrison MSS.

² See Appendix.

venture risking any of His Majesty's Ships being damaged or corner'd, as a marine force of the Enemy was in the Mediterranean, two thousand Regular Troops with a small train of Artillery were embarked on board His Majesty's Ships, and the Hereditary Prince of the Two Sicilies went also on board the *Foudroyant* on Thursday last the 14th, and I had the honour at the particular request of the King of Naples, signified to me in writing by Gen^l Acton, to accompany His Royal Highness on this Expedition.

"The Squadron set sail the same morning with a fresh and favourable wind for Naples, and we had before evening performed a third part of the voyage, when His Majesty's Ships the *Bellerophon* and the *Powerful* joined us and brought letters from Lord Keith to Lord Nelson dated the 7th of June, in which Lord Keith informs Lord Nelson that Lord St. Vincent had been obliged to return to Minorca on account of the state of his health ; that he, Lord Keith, with the Fleet now under his command, had looked into Toulon, where there were only two French Ships of the Line refitting, and those Ships taken from the Venetians ; that having had the intelligence that the French Fleet from Brest had only remained six days in that harbour and was gone towards Genoa, he had follow'd them as far as Monaco, and that some of the Frigates of his Fleet had actually been near enough to ascertain their number to be twenty-two sail of the Line, four of which [were] three Deckers, and two of 80 Guns and many Frigates. That His L^p not thinking it would be prudent to proceed any further to leave Minorca exposed, His

Lordship had determined to send the *Powerful* and *Bellerophon* to reinforce Lord Nelson's Squadron and bring him the intelligence of the Enemy's Fleet, which was between Monaco and Cape del Melle, steering Eastward, on the 7th of June. Lord Nelson having received this important intelligence and communicated it to the Hereditary Prince of the Two Sicilies, it was decided that it would not be proper to proceed further, and the Squadron tacked about instantly and came again to an anchor yesterday in the Bay opposite this City. The Hereditary Prince, the Troops and Artillery, were immediately disembarked, and orders were given for the King's Squadron to prepare for Sea directly, and most probably it will be at sea to-morrow. Lord Nelson's intentions cannot be known, but common sense must suppose that a Squadron so very inferior to that of the Enemy will not go in search of that Enemy."

Nelson is said to have incurred the displeasure of the British Home Ministers by bestowing too much service on the Court of Naples, but here is distinct evidence that such interests were secondary to his absolute business in the Mediterranean. Nelson thought Lord Keith had purposely placed him in a quandary, so as to reduce his reputation if repulsed and defeated in an attack upon the French. In a letter which Nelson wrote to Lady Hamilton, dated June 18th, 1799, he says: "Ah! Lord Keith, you have placed me in a situation to lower me in the eyes of Europe. They will say, 'This cried-up Nelson is afraid with eighteen ships to attack twenty-two.' The thought kills me."

In this letter mention is made of the illness of Lord St. Vincent, and as an instance of the general utility of Lady Hamilton, whose kind heart could always be depended upon, may be quoted a line or two written by Nelson to the sick Admiral June 12th, 1799: "If you are sick, I will fag for you ; and our dear Lady Hamilton will nurse you with the most affectionate attention. Good Sir William will make you laugh with his wit and inexhaustible pleasantry."

From a letter¹ of Sir William Hamilton's to Lord Grenville, the following extract is taken :—

" Separate and Secret.

" ON BOARD THE Foudroyant,

" BAY OF NAPLES, July 14th, 1799.

"MY LORD,—As Lady Hamilton was very particularly requested by the Queen of Naples to accompany me and Lord Nelson on this expedition, and was charged by Her Majesty with many important commissions at Naples, and to keep up a regular daily correspondence with Her Majesty, I have found the Queen's Letters to Lady Hamilton so very interesting, doing so much honour to the Queen's understanding and heart, and throwing such a clear light on the present situation of affairs at Naples, that I have prevail'd on my wife to allow me to entrust to your Lordship the most interesting of Her Majesty's Letters ; but not without a solemn promise from me that they shou'd be returned to her by your Lordship on our arrival in England, of which I now see a near prospect,

¹ See Appendix.

as we mean to profit of the first Ship that Lord Nelson sends downwards after that their Sicilian Majesties shall have been happily reinstated on their throne of Naples, having, as your Lordship knows, had in my pocket for more than two years the King's gracious permission to return home for a short time to look after my private concerns."

This letter, accompanying the correspondence specified, written by the Queen of Naples to Lady Hamilton, was to be regarded as unofficial and secret ; therefore another letter was also dispatched, bearing the same date, reporting the progress of events. The rancour exhibited by writers against Lady Hamilton seems inexplicable ; for if the correspondence of the Queen of Naples to Lady Hamilton was of such a quality that it could be sent for the perusal of Lord Grenville, there could have been nothing but what would reflect credit upon Lady Hamilton, and prove her a most able adherent of the Royal Lady who employed her. The sending of the letters destroys any venomous imputation that Lady Hamilton and the Queen of Naples had aught at heart but the quelling of the great troubles in which Italy was involved. The actual position of Lady Hamilton and Sir William was most unenviable, surrounded on all sides by sound of war ; and not many Ministers with leave of absence in their pockets but would have hurried away from such scenes to look after neglected " private concerns." The pension was well earned !

No letter written by the Queen of Naples to Lady

Hamilton, shows aught but that which is respectfully worded to a faithful representative, keenly alive to the responsibilities and emergencies of the moment. In fact, all letters addressed by naval men or British residents at Naples to the wife of the British Ambassador, are absolute proof that she was a lady of assured position ; and though highly gifted and accomplished in arts that gratified her guests at the Embassy, yet these gifts sank into abeyance when the war note was sounded, and all that was noble, useful, and sympathetic was the daily life of that most belied woman—so belied that not one slander of her later life should receive credit unless accompanied by *absolute proofs*. If this were done the true story would rise to the surface and justice be meted to the memory of the “General Patroness of the Distressed in these Perilous Times,” as she was termed by those who appealed to her to extricate themselves or their property from the dangers at Naples.

A letter written to her by the Queen of Naples at this date enclosing 600 ducats for distribution among the needy shows that she was regarded as the best medium for its circulation :—

“20 *Juillet*, 1799.

“Je vous envoie 600 ducats pour en donner selon votre âme bienfaisante aux malheureux qu'en ont besoin, sur que ce sera pour le bien et a propos, car je connais votre âme.”

The Sicilian Princesses were employed, under their Royal Mother, in making up flannels for the poor

from six in the morning in time of cholera, and the Queen herself gave 10,000 blankets to the general fund, and 6,000 flannel girdles.

In the October of 1799 the Queen, in distress of mind, wrote of her burden of cares to her friend at the Embassy: "Were it not for my daughters I should wish to bid adieu to the world, and retire into a convent, there to terminate my days, a desire prompted by circumstances in which I am placed." No frivolous pastime occupied the two ladies at this era!

There is an interesting and important letter of Sir William's, written on board the *Foudroyant* in the Bay of Naples, and dated July 14th, 1799,¹ to which the reader is referred for details written by one actually present at, or immediately in the vicinity of, the actions and events therein described. Three days after this dispatch was written to Lord Grenville, Lord Nelson sent a brief note to Mrs. Cadogan, the mother of Lady Hamilton, in which he said that Sir William Hamilton was much better in health since he embarked, and that Lady Hamilton was very well, "but her time taken up so much with excuses from rebels, Jacobins, and fools that she was every day most heartily tired." To Lady Hamilton all applications for assistance seem to have been made, in the sure reliance that she might be trusted to bestir herself for the relief of the existing necessity. We find Mr. William Compton, D.C.L., Chancellor of Ely (late of Bedford Row, London, then resident at Paysilipo), and relation to the Earl of Northampton,

¹ See Appendix.

writing on July 3rd, 1799, to Lady Hamilton, most urgently begging of her to ask Lord Nelson to send a boat for him and his friends, to remove them from the sanguinary scenes by which they were surrounded. In making the appeal to her Ladyship, he did so saying that "she was the General Patroness of the distressed in these perilous times." That the boat was sent we have good evidence, for six days later (on July 9th), on board the *Foudroyant*, this same Mr. William Compton was married to the eldest daughter of the deceased Gobbett Knipe, Esq., of Tacolnestone, Norfolk.

The much discussed execution of Caracciolo is mentioned in this same dispatch. Writes Sir William : "Admiral Caracciolo, the Chief of the Rebels of His Sic. Maj^y Marine, not having been comprised in the Cardinal's Treaty, but had been taken trying to make his escape by land, was by Lord Nelson's orders tried on board the *Foudroyant* by a Court Martial composed entirely of Neapolitan Marine Officers, and was condemn'd to be hung up at the yard arm of the Neapolitan Frigate the *Minerva*, the very same Ship he had fired upon with the Gun Boats of the Neapolitan Rebels, at 5 o'clock of the Evening of the same day, where he hung until sunset, to the great satisfaction of his Sicilian Majesty's Loyal Subjects, thousands of which came off from Naples in boats with loud applause at so speedy an act of Justice, for this happened the day after the King's Squadron came into Naples. His body was afterwards thrown into the Sea."

Among the mis-statements with which naval history

of this epoch abounds, it is said the Queen of Naples was present at the execution of Caracciolo. Her Majesty remained at Palermo, and in writing to Lady Hamilton said that the King's going alone caused her many tears, and would cause her more when he sailed next day ; but he deemed it advisable for her not to go with him for the short time he intended to remain away. After he was gone she wrote that daily they carried the Sacraments in procession to bless the sea, and pray for the King and Naples.

The execution of Caracciolo to which Sir William Hamilton alludes has had several ways of telling, but few could be more reliable than that of the signal mate of the *Foudroyant*, Lieutenant Parsons,¹ into whose charge the rebel was given on the morning of June 29th, 1799, when he was brought to that vessel in a Neapolitan boat guarded by ragged ruffians from Cardinal Ruffo's army.

Caracciolo—a short, thickset man, apparently strong, but haggard from recent want, his clothes tattered and miserable—was placed on the poop strongly guarded by marines. Shortly afterwards he was ushered into the ward-room to be tried. One of his own officers, Count Thurn, sat as president. He spoke manfully in his own defence. "I am accused of deserting my King in his distress and leaguings with his enemies. The accusation is so far false, for the King deserted me and all his subjects. It is well known by you gentlemen that the frontier was covered by an army under General

¹ "Parkinson" Nelson erroneously writes of him: "Mr. Parkinson is a good and worthy man."

Mack, superior to the advancing enemy, and you are aware that the sinews of War is Money. The King collected everything that could be converted into specie on pretence of paying that army, embarked it in His Britannic Majesty's Ship *Vanguard*, even to the enormous amount of 500 casks, and fled with it to Palermo, there to riot in luxurious safety. Who then was the traitor? The King or myself? Such cowardly desertion by the Sovereign—Mack's ¹ army disbanded for want of pay, and the French Army occupied Naples."

Miss Cornelia Knight in her autobiography makes use of the word "desertion" in her account of the King's flight from Naples.

The English families had been received on various ships of war preparatory to sailing for Palermo. After passing a very uncomfortable night, the next morning was more calm, and it was noticed that Lord Nelson's ship had the signal for sailing, but no other vessel had. She says, "Our feeling of 'desertion' is not to be described, and the murmurs and animadversions we were constrained to overhear added not a little to the painful sensations we ourselves experienced." Captain Hardy came with a message, and as soon as he returned to the *Vanguard* those on the other vessels saw Nelson, the King and Queen of Naples and family, sail out of the bay. "It would be impossible for any one who has not been in similar circumstances to imagine the abandonment which I then experienced."

¹ After the surrender of Ulm to Bonaparte, General Mack lived at Vienna in the greatest privacy upon a pension allowed him by the Emperor of Germany.

All the Prince's (for Caracciolo was a Prince) estates lay in Naples, and he had a large family ; speaking of



LADY HAMILTON.

After the painting by Angelica Kaufmann.

whom his lip quivered when he appealed to such as were parents how they would have acted. Saying

which he spread out his hands, looking like a brave man in extreme peril. Nevertheless the Court sentenced him to be hung at the yard-arm of his own flagship, the *Minerva*, which he had at one time commanded. Hearing the sentence, he begged to be shot rather than degraded as a felon. He asked his keeper, Mr. Parsons, to seek the mediation of Lady Hamilton ; but she was nowhere to be found, and so in the afternoon the Prince walked into Nelson's barge with thirty seamen under one of the lieutenants from the *Foudroyant*, and was taken to the *Minerva*, where the death sentence was carried out about two hours after it was passed. On the signal firing of the gun the sailors swarmed the rigging, but there was no exhibition of regret or feeling.

It is curious that in their correspondence neither Sir William Hamilton nor Nelson makes any mention of the rising of the body of Caracciolo from the sea, into which his weighted corpse had been cast.

For many reasons the summary execution of sentence upon such a man as Prince Caracciolo should have been averted, if only from consideration of his once honourable position. As Commodore Caracciolo he sailed out to meet Nelson and congratulate him when returning to Naples after the Battle of the Nile. When the royal family of Naples fled to Palermo on board the English ship commanded by Lord Nelson, Caracciolo was in the Bay of Naples in charge of a Neapolitan man-of-war, and that the English vessel was selected in preference to his own seems to have chagrined him ; but at that time no fears were entertained about his

own fidelity, it was his crew who were doubted. He took his ships safe to their port, but personally was full of gloom ; at a dinner-party at General di Pietra's he looked utterly miserable, ate nothing, not even undoing his table-napkin, and scarcely speaking. He was a Bailli of the Order of Malta, and a great favourite at Court, where he had charge of the nautical education of Prince Leopold, the second son of the King of Naples, then nine years of age.

Thus it was beyond question a merciless act that a man who had held such honourable appointments should hear sentence and die upon the same day. His appeal of justification was only too true. It was the King of Naples who deserted, in spite of the cries of his people that he should remain at Naples.

It must unquestionably be admitted that the execution of Caracciolo was a mistake, a grievous mistake. Nelson, deeming it more courteous to hand him over to be judged by Neapolitan officers, absented himself from the trial, and irritably walked the deck. All things considered, he should never have permitted the final act to so closely follow the sentence—for the case was exceptional, and the Prince's record good until he was ruined as a victim of war ; his piteous plight, his evident sufferings, under the very worst conditions, merited a more humane judgment than that he should be suddenly cast into eternity ; and especially when his previous good character and honourable mention by Sir John Jervis, afterwards Lord St. Vincent, is considered, it can only be acknowledged that mercy should have been exercised.

In April 1796 Chevalier Caracciolo commanded the *Tancredi*, and in writing to Sir John Acton on the 2nd of that month, from on board the *Victory* in San Fiorenza Bay; Sir John Jervis included the splendid valuation he placed upon the services of Caracciolo. He says : " The *Tancredi* anchored here yesterday, and from the report of the physician to the fleet (enclosed) I am impelled by the dictates of humanity to send her to Naples immediately. To the want of bedding and warm clothing during the winter season may be ascribed this dreadful infectious fever, which is not to be eradicated without sending the people on shore and fumigating the ship. When the sun approaches a little nearer to us I shall be under no apprehension for the crews of the other ships. Their being copper-sheathed is a very pleasant circumstance, and I look forward to their juncture with pleasure.

" I have great obligation to the Chevalier Caracciolo for giving protection to the Trade bound from Leghorn to Naples and Civita Vecchia lately, the escort having been found too weak to encounter the French privateers in the Channel of Piombino without his aid ; and I have every other reason to be satisfied with his conduct during the short time the *Tancredi* has been under my orders, and I greatly lament the necessity I am under to part with him."

This was written of the man so quickly launched into eternity after capture, whose wrongs and piteous appeal had no time for consideration on account of sharpness of action, which Nelson countenanced ; for though he kept aloof he permitted it, and in fair

dealing with this passage of history no other view can be taken of the unfortunate incident.

The really reliable Reminiscences which Lieutenant George Samuel Parsons published in 1843, have been received with contemptuous remarks by recent Nelsonian writers, merely, it would seem, in order to detract from the word of one who spoke well of Emma, Lady Hamilton, from personal observation. Why this unfair desire to reduce the standing of any who are honest enough to write of things as they occurred, and not as is necessitated by the mistakes of older writers or the wilful misleadings of certain biographers? We are no longer in the blind belief that Lady Hamilton was a *notorious* woman; the word may reasonably be exchanged for *notable*. Keen investigation only discloses that which is in her favour. That the word of Lieutenant Parsons should be treated with contumely for the misguidance of readers to whom opportunities for investigation might never occur, is not honest, and the career of the gentleman himself will show that none could be found with better experience to recount than he who in April 1798 acted as Nelson's signal midshipman on the *Vanguard*, in which capacity he worked the signals on the capture of the *Généreux* and also the *Ville de Marseilles*, an armed store-ship; likewise at the taking of the *Guillaume Tell*, Rear-Admiral Decrès' flagship. During an expedition to Egypt he acted in the same capacity for Lord Keith. For his services in Egypt he was presented with a gold medal by the Turkish Government. During his later career he served in the chief vessels doing the most

important services in both the West and East Indies. Why should such a one not be able to write of what he saw without offensive query? He went on half-pay in December 1810, being then Commander. He died at his residence, Holt Hill, Birkenhead, January 20th, 1854, aged seventy-one years, and left a numerous family.

The following account of the capitulation of Naples from one who took an active share in final events, an English gentleman on his travels, but resident at Naples for the time being, may be relied upon as a true account of his mission as interpreter. After reading the account of the Cardinal's Treaty which Sir William wrote so comprehensively and concisely to Lord Grenville,¹ the passion of Lord Nelson at the easy terms of evacuation afforded to the rebels by Cardinal Ruffo was excusable. Most intense was Nelson's aggravation on arriving at Naples at such a juncture, when he had witnessed the horrors of the escape of the Royal Family and refugees to Palermo, driven from kingdom and homes by the traitors and invaders who were passing away scatheless and unpunished, leaving only the tracks of their presence in the misery and broken homes of the Royal adherents. Sharp action was required, and to Nelson, the soul of honour, the very terms of the Cardinal's Treaty were sufficient to inspire furious indignation. The account which follows is in itself curious as regards the ruse by which an interpreter was enlisted. But the narrator always refused to supply his experience when requested to do so even by the highest authorities in England, thinking that his

¹ See Appendix.

version might reflect discredit upon Nelson and others.

"I was living at Naples, which was then in the power of the Royalists, when I was sent for by Captain Foote of H.M.S. the *Sea Horse*, who showed me some letters of Sir William Hamilton's, enclosing others from Lord Nelson, from which it appeared that Nelson had gone with an inferior force to meet the French and Spanish Fleet, which was expected to arrive to relieve the Castles of Naples. Foote was directed to use every effort and make the best terms to get immediate possession of the Castles, and as he did not understand Italian he requested me to go at once to Cardinal Ruffo, state the case, and arrange with him whatever was necessary to carry out the object. The hurry was such that the dispatches Foote had just received were placed in my hands for perusal, and to serve at once as credentials and instructions for me in my negotiations with the Cardinal, to whom I was to apologise for the informality of sending them in such a manner. An English uniform was procured ; thus equipped I set out with Captain Oswald on my mission to the Cardinal, who agreed to grant liberal terms.¹ The Capitulation was signed, and in less than forty-eight hours after it had been concluded, Nelson returned to the Bay of Naples. I had been on shore with Captain Drummond, and had left the boat with orders to wait for us until night to take us back ; and on reaching the beach to return we saw a fleet had arrived, and were in the utmost

¹ The writer has here inserted as footnote that on their passing the forts they were several times fired at, but the shots took no effect.

distress for the first moment, thinking it was the French Fleet. Our boat was gone, and having discovered by the signals that were making that it was the English Fleet, we took a fisherman's boat and went on board the Admiral's Ship, where we found Lord Nelson in a violent passion, which Sir William Hamilton was vainly endeavouring to appease. Lord Nelson told me, 'Tell the people on shore when you return that to-morrow I will batter down their city.' I begged to be excused from delivering such a message, and Sir William said, 'I hope Lord Nelson will be calmer to-morrow morning and think differently,' entreating me not to mention what had occurred. On the following morning some friends were breakfasting with me at Chiaja when the Commander of the Russian Forces was announced (his name, I think, was Baillie, and he was the nephew of a Scotchman who commanded the Russian Navy). He informed us that Nelson appeared more calm and quiet, and had directed him to carry out the Capitulation according to the terms agreed upon, at which we all rejoiced; but this proved to be only a ruse, for the ships on board of which the garrison had embarked in the expectation of being conveyed to Toulon were fastened astern of the English Men of War."

It must be remembered that the gentleman who acted as interpreter, had only the word of the Commander of the Russian Forces that Nelson had ordered him to carry out the terms of the signed Treaty, for Nelson never intended that the French should proceed to Toulon until the Treaty had been laid before the

King of Naples, and received his sanction or otherwise, for the King had not been mentioned in the Treaty which Cardinal Ruffo deluded Captain Foote into signing.

Nelson arriving at such a moment would seem to have taken the only course open, to detain the French and rebels until the King's pleasure was known, but it is evident that he himself did not attach much importance to Captain Foote's conduct as meriting censure, knowing that he had been deceived by Cardinal Ruffo ; for very shortly afterwards Nelson wrote to the Captain : " I can assure you, my dear Sir, that it affords me infinite pleasure to convey to you this distinguished mark of his Sicilian Majesty's approbation." This was an elegant snuff-box with the initials F. R. in small diamonds, worth about four hundred guineas, sent by the King in return "for most important services by him in the Bay of Naples when Lord Nelson was obliged to order Commodore Troubridge to join him ; and for taking Castel a Mare."

After seeing much sea life Captain Foote was promoted to the rank of Rear-Admiral in 1812 and Vice-Admiral in 1821, and nominated a K.C.B. May 19th, 1831. He resided for many years at Highfield House, Southampton, where he died May 23rd, 1833, aged 66 years. He was noted for his mild and gentlemanly manners, and was highly respected.

Sir William Hamilton in his dispatch of August 5th, 1799,¹ says there is not a Frenchman left in the kingdom of Naples, and that the King had desired Lord Nelson to carry him back to Palermo until such

¹ See Appendix.

time as it would be safe and convenient to return with the Queen and the Royal Family to Naples. Cardinal Ruffo was left in power "tied up as tight as possible, but," writes Sir William, "neither Lord Nelson nor I can be brought to relish such half-measures, which generally prove the worst, though the only in vogue in this country." "I must say," he continues further on in the same letter, "that had His Lordship [Nelson] detached any Ships from His Squadron soon after our arrival in this Bay, in all probability The Two Sicilies would have been lost. Their Sicilian Majesties, Their Ministers, and all Naples are convinced of this truth, and there are no bounds to the gratitude they daily express towards the King, the British Nation, and to the incomparable Lord Nelson, and the rest of the brave Commanders of this His Majesty's invincible Squadron, by which their Sicilian Majesties are now placed on their Throne of Naples, and more than seven hundred of their rebellious subjects that would have escaped have been secured and are now lying at the mercy of His Sicilian Majesty."

These were the rebels whom Nelson intercepted and attached to his vessels on arriving at Naples to prevent Cardinal Ruffo's Treaty being carried into effect, and for which he received severe castigation from headquarters ; but the case is now better understood.

"His Sicilian Majesty," writes Sir William from Palermo August 17th, 1799,¹ "arrived here in three days from the Bay of Naples in the *Foudroyant*, on the 8th instant in the afternoon, when the Queen of

¹ See Appendix.

Naples, the Hereditary Prince, and all the Royal Family immediately came on board to welcome His Majesty-in His happy and Triumphant return to this Capital. In the Evening Lord Nelson and I had by their own desire the honour of attending their Majesties and the Royal Family in Lord Nelson's barge to a superb landing-place erected and decorated for the purpose on the shore of this City. Their Majesties were received with the loudest acclamations of Joy, and with a general salvo from the Castles of Palermo, and from all the shipping in the Harbour. The Royal Family proceeded directly in great state to the Cathedral, when a solemn Te Deum was sung, and the whole city was illuminated for three nights on account of Their Majesties having been perfectly happily secured on their Throne of Naples, and the French having been completely beaten and driven out of that Kingdom. As the Fêtes of St. Rosalia, the Titular Saint of this City, had been deferred until His Majesty's return, they have now taken place, and we are in the midst of Fireworks, Illuminations, and Processions every night. . . . His Sicilian Majesty, on quitting the *Foudroyant*, made Captain Hardy a present of his picture on a snuff-box richly set with large Diamonds, and a valuable Diamond Ring, and another Diamond Ring was presented in His Majesty's name to Mr. Tyson, Lord Nelson's Secretary. . . . A few days after our return the Duke of Ascoli, one of His Sic. Majesty's gentlemen of the bedchamber, presented to Lord Nelson in his Majesty's name a gold sword richly set with Diamonds, with a Letter in His

Majesty's own handwriting. . . . The same day Lord Nelson received from the Prince Luzzi, Secretary of State in the Foreign Department, by order of His Sic. Maj., a Dispatch . . . acquainting His Lordship that his Sicilian Majesty had been pleased to create him Duke of Bronte, with the rich estate of that name at the foot of Mount Etna, which, as I am credibly informed, is of the clear value of Eighteen Thousand Ducats per annum, although its nominal value is Twenty-four Thousand Ducats. On our late expedition his Sic. Majesty was more than a month on board the *Foudroyant* : the goodness and singular affability of His Majesty was such as to enchant every Officer and Sailor on board. On quitting the Ship at Palermo His Majesty left a present of Two Thousand Three hundred Ounces to be divided among the Admiral Lord Nelson's Servants and the Ship's Company. The King of Naples having remarked Lady Hamilton's zeal for his service, and the trouble she took in receiving the Neapolitan ladies that came on board the *Foudroyant* to pay their Court to His Majesty during our stay in the Bay of Naples, and in keeping up a constant correspondence with the Queen of Naples at Palermo, was graciously pleased to present her with his Picture richly set with Diamonds on our return to Palermo, and the Queen of Naples has done Lady Hamilton the honour to make herself a present after, of her Majesty's Picture and hair set in Diamonds, in bracelets, with a pair of Ear Rings of Diamonds and Pearls, with an Egrette [*aigrette*] and Her Majesty's Cypher in Diamonds, with a complete

dress of the finest point lace. I know also that magnificent presents are preparing for all the Captains of Lord Nelson's Squadron that were employed in the sieges of St. Elmo."

As about this era the Court of Naples gave vent to rejoicings that necessitated finery of costume, and for the time being there was more leisure for thought on such matters, no better moment can be found wherein to bring forward an undated letter of Nelson's (as regards the month) to the Commander of the *Felicity*.

"Saturday Evening, 1799.

"Whatever linnens or muslins you have on board for sale, with some hatts and wigs, I beg you will send them to-morrow morning early to Sir W^m Hamilton's, as Lady Hamilton wishes to send them to the Queen."

Before denouncing the policy of the Hamiltons in pandering to the pleasures of the Neapolitan Court, it must be remembered that, being on the spot, they acted as seemed to them best, and it was the will of the light-minded King of Naples that the Court be kept up, even though surrounded by revolutionary dangers. The post at the British Embassy was no enviable one, and it required no small amount of personal courage to remain in the centre of such terrible scenes as were daily enacted before them. Assassination was of common occurrence, and with such freedom of action it required great tact to please all parties, which only those who resided in Naples could understand and appreciate. Sir John Jervis had at one time been

very anxious for the safety of Sir William and Lady Hamilton, and wrote to Sir William thereon. At no time do this courageous pair seem to have quailed before the dangers by which they were surrounded.

On September 7th, 1799,¹ Sir William writes to



COUNTESS SPENCER AND HER SON LORD ALTHORP.
From a miniature after Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Lord Grenville that "Lord Nelson has been obliged to detach most of the Ships of his Squadron down to Gibraltar and Minorca and on the Coast of Genoa, except the *Foudroyant* and the three Ships of the Line employed with the Portuguese Ships against Malta,

¹ See Appendix.

which we flatter ourselves cannot hold out much longer. . . . The whole and sole confidence of their Sic. Majesties appears to be placed in Lord Nelson; their Majesties are not easy if his Lordship is absent from them for one moment, and as Lord Nelson seems to think that my going home at this moment would distress him, I have let the *Goliath* go down to Gibraltar without me, altho' Capt. Foley was so good, and as he said by the direction of Lord St. Vincent, to offer me and Lady Hamilton a passage home in the Ship under his Command. My own interest or conveniency shall never weigh with me when the King's Service or that of His Sicilian Majesty is any way in question, of which I have given sufficient proofs already, and I have been amply repaid by the very great honours I have received from Their Sicilian Majesties, who were pleased to see my poor endeavours for their Majesties' Service in the most favourable light."

There is no evidence that the Ministers at home were dissatisfied with the allegiance to the King and Queen of Naples shown by Sir William Hamilton, which caused them within a few months to send out Mr. Paget in his place. Pride in his own King and country were first with Sir William.

In a very interesting letter of Sir William's to Lord Grenville marked *Secret*, dated from Palermo December 19th, 1799,¹ he says: "Nothing can be more evident than the necessity of His Sicilian Majesty's speedy return to Naples; the actual State of the Kingdom of Naples and of the Capital, from the

¹ See Appendix.

accounts (a copy of which is enclosed) I have received from one I believe to be well inclined to Their Sicilian Majesties and their Government, is really deplorable. The Prisons are full, and every day fresh prosecutions are begun against persons of every class suspected to have been more or less concerned in the late Rebellion and Revolution, or against zealous Royalists that during the Rebellion committed some acts that cannot legally be justified. No kind of provision having been made for the families and dependants of the principal Rebels that have been executed or banished or have absconded, and whose Estates and property have been either confiscated or sequestered, there are a great many people in want of their daily bread. The Nobility, having been justly deprived of their feudal power, are silent but sulky. The absence of the Court from Naples causes an universal languor there and of course much discontent, and the arrival of the Prince Cassero from hence as a sort of Vice Roy, though styled only Captain General, confirms the Neapolitans in the opinion that His Sicilian Majesty has not the Intention of returning soon to Naples. Lord Nelson and I have spoken our minds very freely on the subject both to the Queen of Naples and Gen^l Acton, who allow of the necessity of the Court's returning soon to Naples, but say that the King will not hear of it at present. I must do justice to the Queen by assuring your Lordship that she often declares her readiness to return to Naples if thought needful, confessing at the same time that after the ingratitude and ill-usage she has met with from the

Neapolitans she never shou'd be happy there. I can well conceive the King of Naples not liking to return to Naples at this moment. His Majesty is sensible that he could not with propriety lead the same dissipated life there as formerly, and he does not yet see such a military force at Naples as he can rely on 'for his own personal security and which I have observed always had a great influence upon His Majesty. At Palermo His Majesty diverts himself much the same as he did at Naples by going from one Country House to another and by shooting. His Majesty has been for the last ten days on the Mountains and in the Woods after wild Boars and Woodcocks.

"In my former Letters I must have more than once mentioned to your Lordship my observations on the general corruption at Naples, and the infinity of defects in Government, and I am sorry to say I do not yet see any intention of endeavouring to reform it. At this moment, when the most energetic Government is wanting, there appears to be little or no Government, for the Queen and General Acton are at variance, and His Sicilian Majesty being now in possession of Gen^l Acton's advice without the medium of the Queen, has withdrawn much of his former attention to her Majesty. The Prince Belmonte and Prince Castelvicala seem to possess most of the Queen's confidence at present, but His Sicilian M^{ty} having secured to himself G^l Acton, now to all appearance takes the whole of business on his own shoulders without consulting the Queen. Although it is impossible to defend Gen^l Acton's conduct throughout, I must own my partiality

for him. I think him an honest man and truly attached to what he thinks their Sicilian Majesties' interest. He is the only man of business that I have met with in this Country, and although a Slave to his Office, he is reproached by the opposite party of undertaking everything, of excluding everybody else and not finishing anything himself. They do not say which party is in the right, but I lament that there should be such a division at this moment, in a Government where the utmost temper and unanimity is required to retrieve the nation from anarchy and confusion and restore to it Peace and good order. I lament that the good heart and most excellent head of Her Sicilian Majesty shou'd be so little consulted. Party in opposition to the Queen allow of Her Majesty's very superior understanding, but say that her passions being very strong and getting the better of her judgement, she is led but too often to open her mind and put her trust in persons very unworthy of her confidence who betray and deceive her, and I fear that the King is of the same opinion."

We find from a letter of Sir William Hamilton's, dated January 17th, 1800,¹ that he could not only give advice and wise counsel when need be, but that he was not afraid to give substantial help in a very practical fashion. He and Lord Nelson remonstrated strongly with the Sicilian Government about the great want of corn at Malta, and the unfortunate and famine-stricken Maltese were thereupon abundantly supplied with the necessary article. He also supplied Captain Ball, Governor of Malta, with

¹ See Appendix.

the sum of eight thousand ounces, which he considered indispensably necessary for the King's service, this being equivalent to a large sum in English money. Efforts have been made to deprive Lady Hamilton of even the reputation of lending a helping hand to these starving Maltese, and we are asked to credit her imaginative brain with the creation of deeds never done. The letters of Captain Ball, appealing to her Ladyship, show that he, the Commander of Malta, valued her services and relied on active measures if he made his applications to her. On October 9th, 1799, he wrote: "I write to Sir William to request he will once more stand forth the benevolent friend of the Maltese, and if your Ladyship will have the goodness to second his views and prevail on the Queen to assist us you will save thousands from misery and death." And again on October 23rd, 1799: "My dear Madam, I had the pleasure of writing to you by the Transfer. As I have experienced your goodness on a variety of occasions, and know the pleasure you have in alleviating the misfortunes of others, I most earnestly solicit your influence with Her Sicilian Majesty to assist the Maltese." Lady Hamilton induced the Queen of Naples to send for the relief of the starving Maltese eight thousand ounces of silver, the private property of herself and her children. When decorated by the Emperor Paul of Russia as a recognition of her exertions, Lady Hamilton wrote to the Hon. Charles Grenville, February 25th, 1800: "I have had a letter from the Emperor of Russia with the Cross of

Malta. Sir William has sent his Imperial Majesty's letter to Lord Grenville to get me permission to wear it. I have rendered some services to the poor Maltese. I got them ten thousand pounds and sent corn when they were in distress. The deputies have been lodged in my house ; I have been their Ambassadress, so his [L.] Majesty has rewarded me. If the King will give me leave to wear it abroad it is of use to me. The Queen is having the order set in diamonds for me, but the one the Emperor sent is gold. I tell you this little history that you may be *au fait*. Ball has it also, but I am the first Englishwoman that ever had it. Sir William is pleased, *so I am happy*." No vain, boastful letter—not half as much indeed as might have been said, and her chief pleasure is that her husband is proud of her.

For two hundred years the Knights of Malta had defeated every attempt to reduce them to submission, and had defended themselves against all the power of the Ottoman Empire ; but in 1798 they were unable to resist the invasion of Bonaparte, who placed a French garrison on the island. With an intrepid garrison the fortifications of Malta were impregnable, and could only be reduced by means of starvation, so a strict blockade was kept up with success, and in September 1800 the island was annexed to England.

It is curious that Nelson should live to consider Sir Alexander Ball his intimate friend and companion ; for when Nelson was on his French tour as a young man, he wrote to Mr. Locker of Greenwich Hospital that he did not choose to associate with two English

officers there who displayed the military foppery of epaulettes. One of those said fops became Sir Alexander Ball. At that time the wearing of epaulettes was considered as dandyism. It was only in 1748 that the first general uniform for the service was adopted. Previous to that there was great variety, ships, like regiments, having costumes peculiar to themselves. George II., it is related, then selected a uniform of blue turned up with white, from admiration of a riding costume of the Duchess of Bedford which was composed of those colours. This regulation is not on record, but is referred to in a subsequent one of 1757.

This Neapolitan period of close friendship, of dangers and pleasures shared, of activity in watching and crushing the foe, and in aiding the distressed and fugitive, was now drawing to a close. On January 6th, 1800, Nelson was given formal notice that Lord Keith had resumed the command, and the irate hero sailed, with not the best grace in the world, to place himself under this, to him, most unwelcome Commander-in-Chief, who was aboard the *Queen Charlotte*. Nelson chafed and fumed during the arrangement of his stars and diamonds, requisite for his decoration when he waited upon his senior officer. The conference was short. Nelson was troubled on behalf of the Hamiltons as well as for himself, for in company with Lord Keith came Mr. Paget to replace Sir William Hamilton as British Envoy, and of this the old knight was quite unaware.

On February 3rd Nelson returned to Palermo from Leghorn in company with Lord Keith. The new Commander-in-Chief was presented to their Sicilian

Majesties. Says Sir William in his dispatch dated February 11th, 1800¹: "His Sicilian Majesty having expressed a strong desire of seeing His Majesty's Ship the *Queen Charlotte*, and Lord Keith having answered that the Ship was at His Majesty's disposition, and entreating of His Majesty to invite his own Company, the appointment was made for last Saturday, when their Sicilian Majesties, The Hereditary Prince and Princess with all the young Royal Family, the Foreign Ministers, the Secretaries of State and all the Principal Officers of this Court, attended at the request of Their Majesties, and had the honor of dining at the same Table with their Majesties and Royal Family.

"In the middle of dinner Their Sicilian Majesties rising up proposed to drink the Health of the King our Royal Master and of all the Royal Family, which they did with tears of gratitude in Their eyes. At the same moment there was a Royal Salute from all the Ships of His Majesty's Squadron at anchor in this Bay ; but Lord Keith, the weather being uncertain, had for the greater conveniency of Their Sicilian Majesties drawn his Ship into the Mole of Palermo, where it was not possible to salute with guns, and which circumstance was, I believe, very pleasing to the young Princesses, who are rather alarmed at the near report of a Cannon. Their Sicilian Majesties and Royal Family visited every part of the Ship, and expressed their astonishment at its dimensions, and at the extreme cleanliness and order which they remarked everywhere."

The fine ship the *Queen Charlotte* was consumed

¹ See Appendix.

by fire very shortly after the fête given by Lord Keith, and but a few hours after quitting Leghorn Roads. Through his glass Lord Keith saw the destruction of his noble vessel, the finest in the British navy, and the dying agonies of the gallant Captain Todd. He saw the horrors of the scenes where men madly rushed to their deaths in the hope of saving their lives ; he saw the awful fate of Lieutenant Erskine, who, while climbing to try and escape, was by a lurch of the ship cast bodily into the crater-like abyss of flame. Hundreds of men were lost by fire or drowning, and when at last a terrific explosion of the gunpowder on board shattered the ship, Lord Keith's feelings unmanned him, and the tears coursed down his aged cheeks while he sobbed convulsively.

Lord Nelson had a piece of good luck at this time which no doubt caused him peculiar satisfaction. To quote Professor Laughton¹ : " He made very little secret of his extreme mortification, and, though he joined Keith off Leghorn, and accompanied him to Malta, it would seem to have been in a determination to take his own way, so far as possible. He had never felt any difficulty about disobeying orders if they were contrary to his judgment or inspiration ; and to look out to the north-west when Keith ordered him to look out to the south-east was a peculiar happiness, more especially as by doing it he fell in with the French store-ships which were endeavouring to break the blockade, under convoy of the *Génereux*, the ship which, after escaping from Aboukir Bay,

¹ The Nelson Memorial.



SIR JOHN ACTON.

had captured the *Leander*. The frustration of the enemy's plan was gratifying to him; the capture of the *Généreux* still more so; but most of all, perhaps,

was the being able to write to Lord Spencer that he had quitted Keith on his own responsibility, and if he had failed, might have been broke."

In Sir William's letter of February 26th, 1800,¹ in which mention is made of the *Généreux*, he says: "On Saturday last his Excellency General Sir John Acton, Bart., was married to Miss Acton, daughter of Major-General Acton, in the Service of His Sicilian Majesty. His Excellency was married at my House in the morning by a Protestant Clergyman, and was married again in the Evening, according to the rites of the Church of Rome, in a private Chapel of the Royal Palace, and in the presence of Their Sicilian Majesties and all the Royal Family, His Sicilian Majesty himself having given away the young Lady to his Excellency."

This young lady was only fourteen years of age, and her uncle, whom she married, was sixty-seven!

When the Archduchess Maria Caroline of Austria married Ferdinand of Naples, she found him so averse to occupy himself with state affairs that, at the instance of her mother the Empress Maria Theresa, she took the reins of Government into her own hands, except a portion which she bestowed on the Marquis de Gallo; but eventually he was supplanted by General Acton, son of an English doctor residing in the South of France, whose power was recognised by a *bon mot*, "Hæc reg; hic regina; hic, hæc et hoc Acton," which was found one morning written on the gates of the Palace at Naples. He became Minister of the Marine,

¹ See Appendix,

then Minister of War, and finally Premier. He was Prime Minister of Sicily for several years, during which his genius helped greatly to prevent the country from falling into the hands of France. Years afterwards, when King Ferdinand dismissed Sir John Acton from public service, on the demand of France, he created him a Prince. He died in 1808.

In a letter of April 7th, 1800,¹ Sir William alludes to the capture of the *Guillaume Tell*. He says: "As the *Guillaume Tell* was the only Ship that remained of the French Mediterranean Squadron, Lord Nelson having given a good account of all the rest, Her Capture is particularly pleasing to His Lordship, he having now completely executed the orders received from His Friend Earl St. Vincent. Lord Nelson's health is somewhat better than it was by the little rest he has had here, but still at times troubled with pains in his head, or Swelling of the heart and inflammation in his Eyes. The Eye that was totally blind has been, however, by Electricity recovered sufficiently to distinguish objects, and hopes may be entertained of His Lordship recovering that Eye." There is a brief statement at the end of this letter: "Mr. Paget is arrived at Naples and expected here daily." The coming of Mr. Paget was hateful to a degree to Sir William Hamilton, insomuch as he was sent out to replace him as Ambassador without his having been officially informed, although the worthy knight who had represented British interests at the Court of Naples for thirty-six years had stated to Lord Grenville most

¹ See Appendix.

courteously that he should make no use of the leave of absence, which he had carried in his pocket for two years, until Peace ruled in the land of Italy and he could retire in favour of a successor when the fray of battle and conflict of nations was stilled. The sudden advent of the new Ambassador was a sad blow to Sir William, but the urbane disposition which had stood him in such good stead in facing and surmounting the troubles by which he was environed helped him to conceal his disappointment, and the worst utterance of trouble to himself to which he gave vent was, that, "after so many years' service and spending all his own money in the King's Service, he deserved something better than dismissal."

How bitter then must have been the writing to Lord Grenville of the closing scene in his career as Ambassador, of the outgoing of the old and incoming of the new Minister ! The disappointment is only too perceptible in the brief and compressed official note in lieu of the chatty, pleasant reports written up to the time when it dawned upon him that his services were no longer required and that he had received "dismission."

On February 7th, 1800, Sir William had written his vexations to Lord Nelson : "As I now find that Lord Keith is really in the place of Lord St. Vincent, established Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, I have now not a doubt but we shall have the extreme satisfaction of returning home with our dearest friend Lord Nelson ; for your Lordship will have known from Emma that I have (after thirty-six years' service

at this Court) been either kicked up or down out of my post ; and Mr. Paget, Lord Uxbridge's son, is named Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the King of Naples, and is on his way here in a Frigate. I have not had the least hint of such an intention from England, public or private ; but Lord Grenville has a letter of mine the beginning of the year 1798, authorising his Lordship to dispose of my place to whom he pleased if he would ensure me an annuity for life of clear £2,000 sterling—not a nominal pension, as I would rather continue at Naples all my life than retire for less. . . . I suppose it is a Cabinet job wishing to provide for Paget, and they could do it no other way than by satisfying me. I see it gives great uneasiness at this Court, and poor Emma is in the greatest distress. But let me get home and settle my affairs, and she and the Queen may dispose of my old carcass as they please."

It can scarcely be thought that Mr. Paget was sent to Naples to improve the morals of the Court. The curt, formal letter of Sir William Hamilton to Lord Grenville resigning his office shows how sorely he felt its necessity.¹

Telling his nephew Charles Greville of his being superseded by Mr. Paget he says : "My taking leave at Court yesterday was certainly a moving scene and does me honour. Mr. Paget has shown great impatience to present his credential letters. I have certainly been friendly and open to him, but his behaviour to me has been cold and reserved from the

¹ See Appendix.

moment of his arrival, nor has he asked me any questions relative to this Court or country, and of which I must certainly know more than he can, having been Minister at Naples before he was born. In short, *entre nous*, if he does not endeavour to make himself more amiable than he is at present, he cannot be much liked here ; but this is only to yourself, and I may be mistaken, as I have seen very little of him."

Lord Nelson had applied for leave of absence on account of his health, which was undermined by his wounds and by constant fatigue ; and in case Lord Keith granted it, and allowed a vessel to convey him home, he offered a passage to the Hamiltons. He was anxious that the whole party should go together in the *Foudroyant*, but Keith would not hear of this. He advised the Queen to get to Vienna as fast as she could to be out of harm's way, for he thought Sicily anything but a safe refuge at this juncture. Lord Keith does not appear to have acted with courtesy or kindness to the Royal Family of Naples during what to them must have been a time of great mental distress and anxiety. Lady Minto, informed by Mr. Wyndham (British Minister at Tuscany), neither of whom were well inclined to Nelson or the Hamiltons, wrote to her sister that "the Queen of Naples asked Lord Keith in her own proper person for the *Foudroyant* to take her back. He positively refused giving her such a ship. The Queen wept, concluding that Royal tears were irresistible ; but he remained unmoved and would grant nothing but a frigate to convoy her own frigates to Trieste. He told her

that Lady Hamilton had had command of the Fleet long enough." In all the correspondence between Wyndham and the Hamiltons it can be seen that they are on distinctly bad terms. Even Lord Nelson felt his unpleasantness, and wrote to Captain Troubridge : "I send you an extract of Mr. Wyndham's unhandsome mode of expressing himself towards me." The same sentence would be equally applicable to Lord Keith, who on June 24th, 1800, wrote of Nelson : "I must go to Leghorn to land the fugitives, and to be bored by Lord Nelson for permission to take the Queen to Palermo, and the princes and princesses to all parts of the globe." The Queen of Naples showed her resentment of his treatment by omitting him in the public leave she took of officials.

The Queen delayed her final departure from Leghorn about a month, and Lord Keith sanctioned the party's use of the *Alexander* to convey them to Trieste ; but the Royal ladies and Lady Hamilton dreaded a sea-voyage of such duration, and it was finally decided to travel overland. Nelson experienced a great trial at Leghorn in parting with his faithful crew of the *Foudroyant's* barge, and their honest affection was shown in the touching note these brave seamen presented to their chief when parting was inevitable.

"*Foudroyant*, 26th June, 1800.

"MY LORD,—It is with extreme grief that we find you are about to leave us. We have been along with you (though not in the same ship) in every engagement

your Lordship has been in both by Sea and Land ; and most humbly beg of your Lordship to permit us to go to England as your Boat's Crew in any Ship or Vessel, or in any way that may seem most pleasing to your Lordship. My Lord, pardon the rude style of Seamen, who are but little acquainted with writing, and believe us to be, my Lord, your ever humble and obedient servants,

“BARGE'S CREW OF THE *Foudroyant*.”

As much heartache may be caused by love as by hate !

Upon their arrival at Leghorn the Queen of Naples gave Lord Nelson a picture of the King, upon the back of which her own initials were inserted in diamonds, encircled by intertwining oak and laurel composed of diamonds and emeralds. Sir William received a gold snuff-box set with diamonds, containing portraits of the King and Queen, and Lady Hamilton was presented with a diamond necklace, with the cyphers in hair of the Queen and Royal children. The Queen had drawn up a deed conferring upon Lady Hamilton an annuity of £1,000 to be paid through the Government bankers, as an acknowledgment of services rendered ; but Sir William refused its acceptance—reward was sure to come from his own sovereign, he thought.

In sending these handsome gifts her Majesty included a gracious letter stating she would wish them to accept some marks of gratitude before they separated, and that she felt she would like to see Lady Hamilton

in a necklace combining the names of herself and four children, as the token of gratitude was equally felt and so expressed by all, and would only cease with life.

Upon the same day Sir William Hamilton addressed his acknowledgments to her Majesty, writing in French.¹

Indignation at the withdrawal of the popular Hamiltons met Mr. Arthur Paget on all sides; and where he had hoped to find in Sir John Acton a friend, he had to face discontent because he had supplanted those who, under the very conflicting circumstances of the times, understood better than any one the position of affairs, and had more successfully coped with revolutionary difficulties. This is shown by the fact that Mr. Paget gave up his post at the end of the year, as he saw his mission was useless and himself powerless.

Soon after his arrival at Palermo in May 1800, he wrote to Sir Charles Whitworth, Minister at St. Petersburg: "In my letter from Vienna I wrote you word that my instructions were positive about getting the K. of Naples back to that place, in consequence of which I have had a great deal of dirty work, and the worst of it is that I have not been quite so successful as we might have wished. I have exacted a promise that he will return, but I cannot get them to fix an early period; the truth is that H.S.M. *has a very proper sense of Danger*—in other words, he is a sad Poltroon, and there are certainly a set of discontented people at Naples who are, as we should say, *up to anything*. The

¹ See Appendix.

Queen has taken an aversion to me and *opposes* everything I *propose*, but she has lost her influence and Acton does everything, and with him I am upon the best terms, save that we quarrel and spar nearly as often as we meet. I hope and trust that we shall remove from him before what I have to ask of you can be put in practice, but I wish you would have instructions sent to the Russian Minister here to second me in this desirable business. He wishes it and sees the necessity of it as much as I do ; *but he is not like us*, for he dare not act otherwise than in the letter of his Instructions, and he has none upon this subject. The Country is really in a most distracted state, and it is expected of me at home that I should do wonders in bringing back order and system, and, in short, a regular form of Government."

Not so easy as distant powers in England imagined, and the failure of Mr. Paget proves the successful diplomacy of the ousted Hamiltons, who were now wending their way to England bereft of property and deprived of income. At the time the French invaded Naples on January 23rd, 1799, and some blood was shed by the mob, Earl St. Vincent sent word to Nelson that the *Goliath* was ordered to be in readiness to convey Sir William and Lady Hamilton to England whenever they chose to quit Italy in its disturbed state ; but Nelson replied that he did not think they would desert their post at that critical juncture. We have seen how bravely they did what they conceived to be their duty.

Very naturally the Queen was much distressed at

their departure, and so expressed herself to Lady Hamilton on October 23rd, 1800 :—

“MY DEAR AND TENDER FRIEND,—I was affected to tears at our separation and by your attachment, of which you have given me so many proofs even to the last moment. That heaven may bless and make you happy is the wish of my heart. May I soon have the consolation of seeing you again at Naples. I repeat what I have already said, that at all times and places and under all circumstances Emma, dear Emma, shall be my friend and sister, and this sentiment shall remain unchanged.”

Mr. Paget attributed much of his inability to succeed to the vexation of the Neapolitans at the departure of the Hamiltons, whom he had supplanted, and to the influence of Lady Hamilton against him. To be even with her Ladyship he wrote to his mother Lady Uxbridge : “I hear that Lady Hamilton is moving Heaven and Earth to be received at Court, but I trust without any chance of succeeding ; pray don't let that be if you can help it.” Not with a virtuous desire to clarify the Court could the exclusion of Lady Hamilton be advocated by Mr. Paget.

The homeward voyage was made under circumstances of intense discomfort. The Commodore of the ship in which the Hamiltons and Nelson sailed (a Russian) was ill in his cot, and his First Lieutenant, who replaced him, was most ignorant and insolent— an aggravating sight for that man of discipline, Nelson conveyed as a mere passenger.

Sir William Hamilton was so ill that his physicians almost despaired of his life, and it was thought necessary he should arrange his worldly affairs; but these indeed troubled him most of all, and no wonder that Nelson wrote of him as "ill, distressed, and harassed"—his funds were entirely exhausted, his property smashed and pillaged by the infuriated mob at Naples, and he had had to borrow various sums of money from Nelson, commencing in the January of 1799, at the time of the flight from Sicily to Palermo, from which date to the landing in England the loans had amounted to £2,276. Some of this was expended on the journey, the expenses of which were greatly increased by their detention at one place and another owing to the dangers that the Queen of Naples and family would have inevitably fallen victims to had they not been under the escort of the travelling party.

Fêted and entertained at the cities through which they passed after leaving the Queen of Naples in the safe care of her relatives at Vienna, Nelson, with the Hamiltons and the company under their escort, reached England November 7th, 1800, and landing at Yarmouth they at once proceeded to London.

BOOK II.

England, Home, and Beauty—Miss Knight—A retrospective glance which shows how, in 1785, the impressionable Captain Nelson of the Boreas had a Platonic attachment for a charming Mrs. Moutray, and how after they parted his susceptible heart was caught on the rebound by a pretty little widow with a rich uncle—President Herbert—H.R.H. Prince William gives the bride away—Marriage of the Rev. W. Nelson—Nelson's father and sister—Mrs. Horatio Nelson has courtly aspirations—Lieut. Josiah Nisbet saves Nelson's life and is promoted to a command, which he proves unworthy to hold—Nelson's unhappiness—Nisbet promises amendment, but behaves worse than ever—A Court Martial imminent—Lady Nelson takes her son's part—Gift of £10,000 to Nelson—Alexander Davison—Lady Nelson's unsympathetic flippancy—Her jealousy of Nelson's family and devotion to her son—His mischief-making—Visit of Nelson and the Hamiltons to Fonthill—Somebody's daughter—The Revels—Letter of the hostesses to Lady Anne Hamilton—Lady Nelson makes up her mind and separates from her husband—Admiral Collingwood—Nelson's letter to Davison—He is most miserable—Letter to Admiral Lutwidge—Financial difficulties of Sir William Hamilton—Nelson a true friend—His goodness to Josiah and Lady Nelson—Her Ladyship professes surprise when Nelson wishes to be left to himself—Her imprudence—Countess Spencer—Lord St. Vincent a trusty counsellor—Nelson's last interview with his wife—Letter to Davison—Evidence of Nelson's generous heart and forgiving spirit—Lady Hamilton sacrifices her diamonds on the altar of wifely duty—Celebration of her birthday on board the St. George—Her many engagements—Sale of Sir William's pictures, etc.—A false rumour—Captain Thomas Louis—Sir Alexander Ball—Pettigrew's defamation of Nelson—Statement of the daughter of

Horatia's nurse—Mr. Joseph Mayer, F.S.A., and the Thompson letters—Nelson in the Baltic—Bronte estate an anxiety—Forged letters and documents compared with genuine ones—Alderman Smith's suspicions—An unfortunate love-affair—Money matters—Nelson's favourite "sub"—The return of Nelson and Parker after Copenhagen—A happy party on tour—Captain Parker's peep at France—Truly a hero—Nelson's grief—A sad party at Deal—"God's will be done"—Nelson's generosity—The poor mother—Letters of Sir William Hamilton.

BOOK II.

UP to the present time there had been no serious difference between Nelson and his wife, nor apparently had he any idea of a coming storm. He bought her at Hamburg some lovely lace for a Court dress, and being wishful to acknowledge the kindness of a lady friend (Mrs. Davison no doubt) who had shown Lady Nelson courtesy in his absence, he purchased for her a rich black lace cloak. He drove to Nerot's Hotel in King Street.¹ Lady Nelson had made no advance to meet her husband, which in itself was sufficient to cause comment, but she remained at her hotel with Nelson's infirm father awaiting the arrival. She entertained the Hamiltons at dinner that same night, at the house in Grosvenor Street lent to Sir William Hamilton by his cousin William Beckford, Esq., of Fonthill. The primary cause of disruption between Nelson and his wife was *not* solely jealousy of Lady Hamilton ; but the misdeeds of her son Josiah Nisbet, which had necessitated his temporary dismissal from the service, augmented other disturbances. It cannot be denied that Lady Nelson

¹ St. James's Theatre in King Street stands on the site of Nerot's Hotel.

brought her troubles on herself, and for this very fact she found no sympathy from any of her husband's relations and friends. Miss Knight, who was so proper that she was selected to act as companion to Princess Charlotte, and had for some time resided with the Hamiltons in Italy and come to England in their charge, has written that up to this time there was no impropriety in living with the Hamiltons; but with Lady Nelson acting as she did, and Nelson supporting Lady Hamilton from a feeling that she was being unjustly treated by his wife, the friends of Miss Knight very rightly advised her to remove from their house.

An opportunity to introduce Lady Nelson into this narrative has not occurred so far, as she took no part in the scenes which have been described; but before proceeding further it will be as well to give some little account of her marriage with Lord Nelson.

In 1785 Captain Nelson of the *Boreas* was on the West India Station, devoted to his profession, yet finding time to lighten his diligent labours by shore visits to the houses of the Governors or other well-to-do resident gentry. Here, of course, he met the best female society, and his letters to his brother the Rev. William Nelson, who was then unmarried, are of a chatty description, and give a better insight into social life on the station than those written to any other person. He had formed an acquaintance with a Mrs. Moutray, wife of Captain John Moutray, the Commissioner at Antigua, whom also he personally esteemed. Captain Moutray fell into bad health, and he and his wife returned to



LADY NELSON.

From a water-colour drawing by G. P. Harding after Edridge, formerly in possession of E. H. Locker, R.N., Greenwich Hospital.

England to stay at Bath, and the Rev. Edmund Nelson, father of our hero, and his only unmarried daughter Kate had arranged to reside there, therefore the ladies would meet, and of Mrs. Moutray the Captain wrote.

to his brother when the time of departure drew nigh :
“ My dear sweet friend is going home. I am like an April day, happy on her account, but truly grieved were I only to consider myself. Her equal I never saw in any country or in any situation. She always talks of you, and hopes if she comes within your reach you will not fail visiting her. If my dear Kate goes to Bath next winter she will be known to her ; for my dear friend has promised to make herself known. What an acquisition to any female to be acquainted with ! what an example to take a pattern from ! ” On March 16th, 1785, again he wrote as the hour of departure was close at hand : “ My sweet amiable friend sails the 20th for England. I took my leave of her with a heavy heart three days ago. What a treasure of a woman ! God bless her ! ” When he returned to Antigua a few weeks later, he wrote of the desolation he felt at revisiting the place when Mrs. Moutray was no longer there : “ This country appears now intolerable, my dear friend being absent. It is barren indeed. English Harbour I hate the sight of, and Windsor I detest. I went once up the hill to look at the spot where I spent more happy days than in any spot in the world. E'en the trees drooped their heads, and the tamarind tree died ; all was melancholy. The road is covered with thistles ; let them grow. I shall never pull one of them up. ” Thus the marriage of Nelson was preceded closely by a Platonic attachment on his part which lasted all his life and to which no one took exception, for all was open admiration for good qualities. Mrs. Moutray survived him.

In less than two months he was ardently admiring a lady, the one destined to be his future wife. "I am just come from Nevis, where I have been visiting Miss Parry Herbert and a young Widow ; the two latter known to Charles Boyles." A gay youth this Charles Boyles. "Great inquiries after him by the damsels in that Island," wrote Nelson. And one month later he advised his brother William : "*Entre nous*—do not be surprised to hear I am a Benedict ; for if at all, it will be before a month. Do not tell."

This lady to whom his susceptible nature had become so rapidly attached after the departure of Mrs. Moutray was Mrs. Nisbet, widow of Dr. Josiah Nisbet of Nevis, *née* Miss Frances Herbert Woolward,¹ daughter of William Woolward, Senior Judge of the Island of Nevis,² by Miss Mary Herbert, sister to John Richardson Herbert, President of Nevis. Dr. Nisbet was the second son of Walter Nisbet, Esq., of Mount Pleasant, Isle of Nevis, by Mary, daughter of Walter Maynard, Esq., of Nevis, and the grandson of Alexander Nisbet, of Carfine, Co. Lanark, N.B., by Emilia, daughter of the Hon. Archibald Douglas, R.N., fourth son of Francis, seventh Earl of Moray.

Walter Nisbet and his wife had two daughters, Anne and Mary Emilia Nisbet, and three sons :

¹ See Appendix for royal descent of Dr. Josiah Nisbet and Nelson.

² Nevis is a beautiful little spot, nothing more than a single mountain rising like a cone in an easy ascent from the sea, the circumference at its base not exceeding eight English leagues.

Walter,¹ who married Miss Anne Parry at Marylebone Church, London (April 19th, 1784); Josiah Nisbet, born August 7th, 1747, and James Webb Nisbet, who died unmarried.

On June 28th, 1779, Miss Woolward married Dr. Josiah Nisbet, by whom she had one son, named after his father "Josiah," born in 1780; and in the next year, 1781, on October 5th, Dr. Nisbet died, strange to say at Stratford-sub-Castle, Salisbury, England. How he came there is unexplained. Lord Nelson, writing home from the West Indies, says he died insane, but it is very curious that he should be found so far from Nevis, where he had married the President's niece only two years previously. The register of the church at Stratford-sub-Castle (one and three-quarters or two miles north of Salisbury) has the entry: "Mr. Josiah Nesbitt was Buried October the 11th, 1781, aged 33 years." Upon the wall of the church is a tablet to his memory erected by his widow; the name Nisbet would lead to the inference that it was placed there prior to her marriage with Captain Nelson in the West Indies. The inscription on the tablet runs:—

JOSIAH NISBET, M.D.,

OF THE ISLAND OF NEVIS.

BORN 7TH AUGUST, 1747, DIED 5TH OCTOBER, 1781.

THIS MONUMENT WAS ERECTED TO HIS MEMORY

BY HIS AFFECTIONATE WIDOW FRANCES NISBET.

¹ On February 11th, 1784, a meeting of gentlemen interested in the West Indies (including Nevis) was held at the London Tavern, London, the name of Mr. Walter Nisbet being among those present,

The next tablet to Dr. Nisbet's seems to account for his presence in the district :—

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF
JOSEPH WEBB, ESQR.
(ELDEST SON OF GEORGE WEBB, ESQR.,
OF THE ISLAND OF NEVIS),
WHOSE REMAINS ARE DEPOSITED
BENEATH THE ADJACENT TURF.
HE DIED OF A DECLINE
ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE YEAR
1779
AT THE PREMATURE AGE
OF TWENTY-SEVEN.

(Register : buried January 7th, 1779.)

The Nisbets and Webbs were probably related, for the younger brother of the doctor was called James Webb Nisbet. Mrs. Frances Nisbet must have accompanied her husband to England, though it is curious that no mention has been found of any reason for the doctor's making his way to the Salisbury district, save that Mrs. Nisbet had an uncle at Redland not very far off.

Dr. Nisbet (as Captain Nelson wrote) dying insane and without a will, increased the complication of his affairs, which were already troublesome. However, Mr. Stanley, the Attorney-General, whose property was next to Mr. Herbert's in Nevis, undertook to settle it for the widow, and it was hoped some little might be saved, so as to render the son Josiah independent.

There appeared to be a probability that Dr. Nisbet's estate, when affairs were settled, might realise £3,000.

Besides Mrs. Woolward, President Herbert had another sister married to Magnus Morton, Judge of the Isle of Nevis. Their daughter Sally married Captain William Hancock Kelly, third son of Arthur Kelly, Esq., of Kelly in Devonshire, of whom Captain Nelson reported to his brother William that "Captain Kelly is engaged to a lady at Nevis, so he says: I don't much think it. He is not steady enough for that passion to hold long." He did, however, marry the lady, Miss Morton, Mrs. Nisbet's first cousin. Captain Kelly became in after years Vice-Admiral of the Blue.

Captain Nelson's private income was certainly too small for setting up house. The President was anxious to see his niece remarried, for he confided to the Captain (who had confessed that he was poor as Job) that he was a proud man and *must live like himself*, and therefore he could not do much in his lifetime, holding out hopes that upon his decease his niece would be amply remembered in his will. In all Nelson's letters to his relatives just at this time there is a perceptible desire to excuse the President for the failure of what he as a rich man was surely morally bound to perform for his young widowed niece upon the occasion of her taking a second husband, the first marriage having been so very unfortunate. Future promises were all that gleamed in the distance. The bulk of the property went to the President's only daughter, Martha Williams, wife of Andrew Hamilton, Esq., of Nevis,

and in consequence of her death without issue in 1819, pursuant with the directions of President Herbert's will, his nephew Magnus Morton inherited and took the name and arms of Herbert. He married Christian, daughter of George Forbes of Bush Hill, Nevis.

When Captain Nelson was appointed to the *Boreas* his brother William asked if he could carry him as Chaplain. As soon as it was found feasible, a few brief words were sent to intimate that he could be accommodated :—

“ *Boreas*, PORTSMOUTH, April 23, 1784.

“ DEAR BROTHER,—Come when you please. I shall be ready to receive you. Bring your canonicals and some sermons. Do not bring any Burnham Servants.”

The climate did not agree with the Rev. William Nelson, and after being at Antigua for about four months he returned to England, but the brief visit to his brother's quarters familiarised him with the residents, which rendered correspondence more interesting. Mrs. Nisbet was not then known to them.

In writing home to his relatives Nelson enveloped his love with the halo of perfection usually attributed in such a situation, and he lived on hopes and surmises of what her uncle the President would do for her ; but, reading between the lines, the characteristics of his *fiancée's* family were evidently not of the most pleasant kind. The President had promised £2,000 to his niece Frances Herbert Woolward when she married Dr. Nisbet, and he told Captain Nelson that he had given, and should pay to little Josiah

£1,000 when he grew up, and that he should bring him up at his own expense and put him in the way of providing for himself—none of which promises did he carry out, Nelson providing the money for his education and placing him in his profession. To a man of such vast wealth £1,000 was a paltry sum to promise. His stock of negroes¹ and cattle was estimated at £60,000, many estates in the island were mortgaged to him, and he knew not the limit of his great wealth; but for all that he was not a pleasant, considerate person. In no way did he offer to give the couple any income, but contented himself with remarking that he looked upon his niece as his child, which caused Nelson to think he had the intention of providing handsomely for her; but he was in no way satisfactory, as the Captain wished that whatever he might do at the time of marriage he would do spontaneously. Nelson remarked that the best way to get it was to appear not to want it. The President told Captain Nelson that when he died he would leave his niece £20,000, or if his daughter deceased before himself, Mrs. Nelson that was to be should have the greater part of his property. The President of Nevis certainly kept faith with neither of his niece's husbands. We find that after six years from the date of Dr. Nisbet's marriage with her, her *dot* was still unpaid, though she had returned to Nevis from England, her having left the island being the excuse for the President to retain the promised gift.

¹ The negro population of Nevis was about 10,000 against 600 whites. The chief production of the island was sugar.

President Herbert, according to Captain Nelson, was a man who must have his own way in everything, yet he *believed* he had a good and generous heart and that he loved his niece and her son sincerely, poor Nelson making the best of everything and anxious that the brightest side should be seen. The uncle Herbert did not realise the hopeful expectations, nor out of his vast wealth did this rich slave-owner and trader give the couple that which he would never have missed from his great riches, to enable them to set up housekeeping in comfort.

At the end of November 1786 there arrived at Antigua the *Pegasus*, commanded by H.R.H. Prince William Henry (afterwards King William IV.) of whom on December 12th Nelson wrote to Mrs. Nisbet that "our young Prince is a gallant man ; he is indeed volatile, but always with great good nature. There were two balls during his stay, and some of the old ladies were mortified that H.R.H. would not dance with them, but he says he is determined to enjoy the privilege of all other men, that of asking any lady he pleases."

Already within this brief acquaintance had the Prince made Captain Nelson promise that he should attend the wedding, and said that he would give away the bride himself.

The young Prince was most diligently attentive to his profession, but "he has his foibles as well as private men, but they are far over-balanced by his virtues."

Nelson, failing the requisite income to enable him

Nelson's Friendships

to take a wife, had no intention of marrying until the end of 1787, and then he would return to England

Norris.

*I William Jones, Esq., Rector of the Parishes of Saint John and Saint Thomas in the said Island, do hereby certify that Horatio Nelson, Esquire, Captain of his Majesty's Ship the *Race*, and Frances Herbert Nisbet, Widow, were married this eleventh day of March in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty seven, according to the forms and constitutions of the Church of England, at the dwelling house of the Honourable John Richardson Herbert (President of his Majesty's Council and Deputy Ordinary of the said Island) in the aforesaid Parish of Saint John. Given under my hand the day and Year above written.*

Will. Jones.

*This marriage was solemnized between us
in the presence of . . .*

William Jones

Horatio Nelson
Frances Herbert Nisbet

NELSON'S MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE.

and live quietly on land, for he could not subject his wife to the discomforts of life on board ship. However, at Sandy Point on March 6th Prince William told

Captain Nelson that unless he were married when they went to Nevis (whither they were bound) he could not be present at the wedding ; that he wished to show his esteem, and would be mortified if impediments were thrown in his way. On March 10th, 1787, they sailed for Nevis, and on the 12th the wedding took place, according to the papers of the day, in Figtree Church.¹ The Prince gave away the bride, and his signature is attached to the register.

The baptism of Mrs. Nelson (Frances Herbert Woolward) is registered in May 1761, when she appears to have been three years old ; in November 1785, Nelson wrote of her as a young widow of 22 years of age (when at least she was 25) ; she must have been 26 or 27 years old when she married Captain Nelson, while he was 29. An uncle, William Suckling, Chairman of the Board of Customs, made him an allowance of £100 a year for a while after his marriage.

The lady had been a slave-owner herself, in keeping with the family usages, a common practice in those days. We find in a bequest to her as a girl from Thomas Williams of Saddle Hill, "Item : I give and bequeath unto Fanny Woollward for ever, daughter of William Woollward, a negro man named Cato."

At Antigua Prince William Henry and Captain Nelson were hospitably entertained by Governor David Parry, the same gentleman who in 1788 interested

¹ The papers of the day were wrong. The marriage ceremony was performed at the house of President Herbert. See the facsimile of the marriage certificate.—M. H.

himself with the Lord Bishop of London for bettering the spiritual condition of the slaves in the West Indies, and to whom he wrote :—

“ BARBADOES, *July the 29th*, 1788.

“ MY LORD,¹—I am honoured with your Letter, and shall esteem myself fortunate when any Subject shall arise that may afford me the pleasure of your Lordship's Correspondence.

“ The instruction of the Slaves in the Doctrines and Duties of the Christian Religion, indeed it is shamefully neglected in the British West India Islands ; the advantages that would result from it to the Slaves and to their Owners must be obvious to the meanest capacity. For without Religion and the moral ties of Christianity, little honesty can be expected from the one, or Humanity from the other ; we may accumulate laws without end, but if the manners of the people are vicious and Corrupt, not all the Penal Laws that the most Bigotted, Cruel Inquisitor can invent will bind them. *Quid leges sine moribus vanæ Proficient ?* I shall assemble the Clergy of this Island without loss of time, make known to them your Lordship's Benevolent, praiseworthy sentiments, and give every Countenance and Encouragement in my power to the Laudable undertaking you recommend.

“ I have the honour to be, with every possible sentiment of Respect and esteem, My Lord, Your Lordship's most Obedient and most humble servant

“ D. PARRY.

“ THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.”

¹ In possession of J. Hargreaves, Esq., Rock Ferry, Cheshire.

Prince William Henry was as willing to stand godfather at a christening as to stand father to a bride in the West Indies, as we find in the following letter written by a lady resident at Antigua in 1789, when the Prince was about to return home on the *Andromeda*:—

“MY DEAR MADAM,—His Royal Highness Prince William having done me the honour to say he would take charge of my letter, I write a few lines, though from my approaching confinement writing is extremely troublesome to me; and as I am unable to say much, I will confine myself to *great people*. You will certainly be pleased to hear that the Prince lived almost wholly with us during his stay in this Island, upon the most pleasant and easy terms with us, and often said they were the happiest four weeks he passed in this Country. His attachment to us was most flattering, and exactly of the sort to be wished by us; expressing in the warmest terms his approbation of my husband's professional conduct, and the utmost respect always accompanied his attentions to me; indeed, from no man did I ever receive so much, which I have the greater reason to be proud of as a contradiction to the idea that his Royal Highness is unguarded in conversation before women; but so far is this from being the case, his conduct was such as few persons would believe who were not witnesses of it. You will readily believe it has impressed us with the strongest attachment to him. I have seen too much of the world to pin my faith upon the

professions of any man, but should our connexions with the Prince end here we should be most ungrateful not to hold ourselves ever under obligations to him for the marked attention he paid us in all respects. He gave us his picture set in a ring. The infant whose birth I hourly expect is to be called 'William Henry' by the Prince's particular desire if a boy, and 'Augusta' if a girl. His Royal Highness is very anxious it should be a boy, and so are we on that account. Little Jane has lost a charming companion in the Prince, for they were kissing and quarrelling all day long.

"MARY S——.

"ANTIGUA, WEST INDIES, *April* 1789."

That the lady in Antigua was right in saying that the manners of Prince William were excellent is further supported by Nelson, who had seen the Prince at Plymouth in January 1788, having met him by special invitation. "I returned from Plymouth three days ago, and found Prince William everything I could wish—respected. Those who knew him formerly say he is an altered young man, and those who were prejudiced acknowledge their error." He had greatly improved.

We give two uncommon portraits of his Majesty King William IV. when Duke of Clarence, which have a curious history. Cosway painted a miniature portrait of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, with the dress and details lightly done in pencil, the face being beautifully worked up in colours. This work,

which was engraved, gave such satisfaction at Court that H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence decided to have his portrait executed in the same style, as a pendant



KING WILLIAM IV. WHEN DUKE OF CLARENCE.

After miniature by Cosway.

to that of his brother. So Cosway painted the miniature which represents the Duke as wearing flowing and powdered hair. This portrait was

engraved, when the idea suggested itself to H.R.H. that the flowing hair did not look very sailor-like, and savoured more of the Court life than of a sea-faring one. So the engraving was not allowed to be circulated, and the miniature, now in the Royal Collection, was returned to the artist with the request that he would erase the pencilled flowing locks and replace them by the representation of closely cropped hair. One can discern on the background of the original miniature—but not until one has heard the story—the abrasion caused by the removal of the flowing hair.

The remark as to the former free language attributed to the Sailor Prince seems to have been well founded, according to the authority of Mr. Bentley, partner of Wedgwood, a few years previously : "I dined yesterday on board the *Terrible* with my friend the Chaplain in the ward-room amongst the lieutenants. When an engagement was expected the young Prince [William] was, much against his will as 'tis said, put on board a small vessel provided for the purpose, and ordered to keep aloof, so as to give him a view of the action and to be out of danger. They say he enters with great facility into the manners of the sailors, and is as great a blackguard as the best of them."

Captain and Mrs. Nelson and little Josiah Nisbet, now a boy of seven years of age, reached England in the *Boreas* in August 1787. The vessel was then paid off.

The Rev. William Nelson had in the November of 1786 married Sarah, daughter of the Rev. Henry Yonge,

Vicar of Great Torrington, and on September 20th, 1787, she gave birth to a daughter, Charlotte Mary,¹ who by marriage became Lady Bridport, mother of the present Lord Bridport. As soon as Mrs. William Nelson had recovered, and was able to look after Josiah Nisbet, he was sent to Hilborough to attend school and live with the Nelsons until the Captain had some home of his own, which he was thinking about in Norfolk. A manservant, Frank Lepée, was sent with Josiah and to remain with him a few days until he was at home with his new surroundings. Nelson wrote to his brother not to allow the boy to do as he pleased, as it was mistaken kindness, and he was to have the same pocket-money as the other boys.

Mr. William Locker told Captain Nelson of a house in London that he thought would be very suitable, but the Captain wrote that for the present he must give up all idea of living near London, for Mrs. Nelson's lungs were so much affected by the smoke of London that he could not think of placing her in that situation, no matter how desirable.

An uncle of Mrs. Nelson lived at Redlands, near Bristol, where, in March 1788, she and her husband went on a month's visit, then to Bath for a fortnight to drink the waters, after which to Exmouth for another visit of a month.

In June Prince William was appointed to the

¹ In August 1787 Captain Nelson wrote to the Rev. William Nelson: "I am much flattered by the honour you intend if the young stranger should be a boy." The boy came later, and was duly christened "Horatio."

Andromeda, to cruise with the squadron then at Spithead. Captain Nelson sent him a letter to congratulate and advise him, wherein one sentence shows that President Herbert was not a man to be talked over even by a Prince ; it also contains a curious application on the part of Nelson for his wife, the lady who did not like London : " I am most truly sensible of your kindness to me on all occasions ; and although Mr. Herbert was hard enough to withstand your solicitations, yet my obligation is the same. There may be a thing perhaps within reach of your Royal Highness, therefore trusting to your goodness I shall mention it. The Princess Royal must very soon have a Household appointed her. I believe a word from your Royal Highness would obtain a promise of a situation in her Royal Highness's Establishment, and not unbecoming the wife of a Captain in the Navy."

On August 19th, 1788, Nelson's father, the Rev. Edmund Nelson, wrote to Mrs. Matcham (his youngest daughter), anticipating the pleasure of the Captain and his wife residing with him : " After an interval of six weeks your letter of the 12th arrived. The affectionate feelings you have enjoyed in your Brother's company I have in some degree been a sharer of, as they are founded upon the same reall and disinterested love which (God forbid) I should be a stranger to. His good Health and Amiable connection must greatly enlarge our pleasure in receiving him, and I am flattered with Hopes that their plan of residing here will add something to the general felicity of our Domestick Union."

Mrs. Nelson seems not to have cared particularly for the quiet of the parsonage, and of this the old clergyman was not unobservant, though of her personal attentions to himself he always wrote in warmest



KING WILLIAM IV. WHEN DUKE OF CLARENCE.

After miniature by Cosway in the collection of H. M. the Queen at Windsor Castle.

gratitude. On January 30th, 1790, referring to a visit Mrs. Nelson purposed making to Mrs. Matcham, he mentioned what he thought about Mrs. Nelson's preference for livelier scenes : " Whether solitude and

exclusion from all the world can be comfortable to a young woman I know not ; she does not openly complain. Her attention to me demands my esteem, and to her good Husband she is all he can expect."

November 12th, 1790 : " Your Brother is well, and I hope fixed at Thorpe, a place he delights in. But I wish it was a little better accommodated to Mrs. N., as a woman who would sometimes choose a little variety."

August 24th, 1793 : " Mrs. Nelson is got to her lodgings at Swaffham, in which no doubt, allowing for circumstances respecting a separation from so kind a Husband, she will be happy. Her income is now easy and independent."

At the beginning of 1793, after experiencing much difficulty in obtaining a ship, Captain Nelson was appointed to the *Agamemnon*. Josiah Nisbet was now thirteen years of age, and accompanied his stepfather on this cruise. Most satisfactory accounts were sent home of his conduct. The comfortable circumstances of Mrs. Nelson to which Mr. Nelson alludes were the receipt of money bequeathed by President Herbert, who had died in January 1793. The legacy¹ he devised was of no very great extent, for one year after receiving it Nelson, from Leghorn, addressed to his wife at Bath, " where I desire you will not want for anything. My expenses are by no means great, therefore don't be afraid of money." In June he wrote to her of her son that " he was affectionate though warm in

¹ It was a sum of £4,000, which brought in £200 per annum. Nelson made over this sum to Lady Nelson when he gave her a separate maintenance.—M. H.

his disposition, which nothing can so thoroughly cool as being at Sea, where nobody has entirely their own way."

After the Battle of Cape St. Vincent, in which Lieutenant Nisbet had signally distinguished himself and been the means of saving his stepfather's life, carrying him to the boat and stopping, as well as he could, the flow of blood from the injured arm, (which was afterwards amputated,) by tying his handkerchief tightly round it, Nelson was proud of him, and, to mark his gratitude, presented him with a silver tankard. There was much courage under the rough exterior of the young man, and if he had served a longer apprenticeship to the subjugation of masterful ways, and the cultivation of courtliness of manner and consideration for others, before being placed in command, he would then have had every opportunity of earning a career of renown, instead of narrowly escaping a court martial, which was the case.

Commodore Nelson advised Lord St. Vincent of his obligations to Lieutenant Nisbet and asked for his promotion. The Earl readily acceded, and favour from him may be relied upon as having been earned. He wrote: "Your Son-in-law is Captain of the *Dolphin* Hospital Ship (24 guns), and all other wishes you may favour me with shall be fulfilled as far as is consistent with what I owe to some valuable officers in the *Ville de Paris*." From the *Dolphin* he was transferred to the *Bonne Citoyenne*. Earl St. Vincent was aware of the anxious time Commodore Nelson had with his stepson, and in writing to thank the Earl Nelson referred to it: "I *wish* he may deserve it ;

the thought half kills me. My dear Lord, there is no true happiness in this life, and in my present state I would quit it with a smile." His forebodings as to future conduct were evidently gloomy enough, but on Captain Nisbet's receiving command of the *Thalia* he for a time behaved satisfactorily, and in hopefulness Nelson wrote of him to his wife: "Josiah is in full possession of a noble frigate. He has sent to say he is sensible of his youthful follies. I sincerely wish he may be, both for his sake and yours."

As a matter of course Nelson had advocated his stepson's advancement, though sadly fearful that he would bring discredit upon himself, for there was nothing lovable in his nature, in manners he was uncouth, and he had everybody's bad word. To Captain Ball, H.M.S. *Alexander*, Nelson wrote, April 21st, 1799: "I hope Captain Nisbet behaves properly; he is now on his own bottom, and by his conduct must stand or fall." That he had misconducted himself the young man was fully aware, and to his stepfather he wrote good resolves to do everything in his power to deserve the unmerited promotion given him, knowing that Nelson, (whom he addressed as *father*,) was the only person on earth who had his interest truly at heart, and he hoped that his future conduct would do away with his former folly. In June 1799 Lord St. Vincent had again to complain to Nelson about him, when he once more promised amendment.

But his conversion and good intentions were but short-lived, for just one year from the date of his promises to act so as to meet the approbation of his

stepfather, and when Nelson was himself beset with his own personal worries, he received a letter from Admiral Duckworth written June 17th, 1800, relative to a ship commanded by one Captain Josiah Nisbet! "The near connection Captain Nisbet bears to your Lordship must ever make me interested that no disgrace should attach itself to him. I therefore felt great concern to find on his arrival that he and his officers were at daggers drawn;¹ the Surgeon, who had been about three months under arrest, was writing for a Court martial on his Captain; and the First Lieutenant with a string of complaints which he signified his intention of sending to your Lordship, that must, (to say the least of them,) quite destroy Captain Nisbet's reputation." Admiral Duckworth, out of regard for Nelson, begged of the officers, who had had a sad time of it, to condone their Captain's delinquencies, but he privately wrote to Nelson that there was no doubt of the desirability of a separation between the parties, and as Captain Nisbet's ship was about to be paid off, a few months' residence with Lady Nelson might correct him

¹ The following resignation of a seaman on board the *Dolphin* is curious. As his Captain was stepson of the Commander-in-Chief, the seaman would not complain but withdrew his services:—

"*Dolphin*, 22nd December, 1799.

"Finding myself incapable of performing my Duty as Carpenter of H.M.S. *Dolphin*, I have taken the liberty to request will you please inform the Commander-in-Chief of my wish to resign my Warrant if it meets his Lordship's approbation. I am with greatest respect, Sir, your most obedient and very humble servant

"JOHN OLVA.

"JOSIAH NISBET, Esq., Commander of H.M.S. *Dolphin*."

of his foibles. Nelson's own position in the fleet must be considered, where it was imperative that the best example should be set if discipline were to be maintained. What obstreperous officer could be called to account while the misdemeanours of the Chief's stepson were overlooked? A court martial on a near relative would have covered Lord Nelson with confusion, and the tact of Admiral Duckworth in pacifying the complainants suffering from the young Captain's domineering ways, and their self-sacrifice for Nelson's sake, command our admiration and respect.

The very presence of this young man, whom Nelson had not seen since he had received such bad accounts from Admiral Duckworth, would naturally be irritating to Nelson; that his stepson should have so signally disgraced himself in the Royal Navy over which he, Nelson, held a position of command, was highly distressing, and there is no doubt that he had a word or two to say on the subject when face to face with the culprit. Lady Hamilton has been made the scapegoat, but there is nothing to show that Lady Nelson resented Lady Hamilton's company until after the arrival in England, when she lent an attentive ear to her son, who had imbibed a feeling of dislike for the Ambassador's wife, noticeable even to the officers in the Mediterranean service, who idolised her; one of whom, Nelson's signal mate on the *Foudroyant*, wrote, as we have already said, that "Lady Hamilton was beloved by every officer in the Fleet except Captain Nisbet, Lady Nelson's son": a singular way of wording it—not Nelson's stepson, but Lady Nelson's son—his mother's boy! And

there he was, with bad feeling already impregnated, sowing the seed of lifelong discord. The character of Lady Nelson was sadly marred by want of sympathy: there is evidence of its absence over the generous gift to her of £8,000 out of the £10,000 voted to Nelson by the East India Company for his services to them in gaining the Battle of the Nile; with the exception of £2,000 to be divided amongst his near relations, the remainder was at the disposal of Lady Nelson by her husband's gift.

There are some curious incidents attached to that gift. On November 9th, 1799, Mr. Alexander Davison of St. James's Square wrote to Mr. Marsh, Kensington Gore, Nelson's banking firm:—

“DEAR SIR,¹—I have received Lord Nelson's letter enclosing his Bill on the East India Directors for £10,000 voted to his Lordship by the Company and with his wishes how it is to be disposed of.

“As Lady Nelson is expected in Town I will take the earliest opportunity of speaking to her upon the subject, and have the Honour to inform you

“I am, dear Sir,

“Your most Obed^t Ser^t,

“ALEX^R DAVISON.”

And on November 13th this communication was followed by another:—

“SIR,²—I am honour'd with your letter, and in reply I beg to inform you that I have no particular direction

¹ In possession of Frederick Barker, Esq.

² Ibid.

Nelson's Friendships

from Lord Nelson respecting the £10,000 further than he tells me that £2,000 was to be disposed of to his Family in the proportions you state and the remainder he was indifferent how it was disposed of. I would therefore recommend you to pay the several Sums, taking particular Receipts from the Parties, specifying on what account and which Receipt ought to be deliver'd to Lady Nelson. The remaining Eight Thousand I would recommend being invested in the 3 per C^t Consol^d Fund in Lord Nelson's name, which his Lordship may afterwards dispose of as he shall judge expedient. As this Ten Thousand pounds is unconnected with every other transaction, your paying Two Thousand Pounds to Lord Nelson's Relatives and Investing Eight Thousand in the Funds will close the transaction, and in a manner, I conceive, as will be satisfactory to Lord Nelson, and I am convinced will meet the approbation of Lady Nelson.

"I have the Honor to be, Sir,

"Your most Obed^t Serv^t,

"ALEX^r DAVISON.

"W^m MARSH, ESQ^r."

But the gifts from Nelson to his relations did not by any means meet with the sanction of her Ladyship, and some remarks concerning the £500 allotted to Nelson's father ("our dear father" she always wrote of him—words are but valueless) reached the ears of the old gentleman, who then declined to accept that which she begrudged. There is, therefore, no receipt from him for the specified sum.

In many ways she had made herself disagreeable to her husband's brother and sisters during his absence; even the following letter shows she contrived to worry her husband by retailing the small annoyance caused by the desire of the Rev. William Nelson to get on in his profession. It is curious to note that, although on the expected visit to Mr. Davison, she makes no allusion to the East India gift in writing to Lord Nelson, nor is there any resentment expressed at his companionship with Lady Hamilton. The mischief never began until Lord and Lady Nelson and Josiah Nisbet dwelt together.

FROM LADY NELSON TO HER HUSBAND
LORD NELSON.¹

"ST. JAMES' SQUARE, Dec. 10, 1799.

[*The residence of Alexander Davison, Esq.*]

"MY DEAR HUSBAND,—I have seen a letter from Lady Berry to Mr. Davison. She tells him of Sir Edward's² letter dated *Foudroyant*, Minorca, October 18th, and mentions you were quite well, which I hope is true. I dined a few days back at Mr. Nepean's; he told me you were at Gibraltar. I thanked him for his intelligence; would have given something to have asked him a question, but that could not be done; therefore I still flatter myself as you are half way we may stand some chance of seeing you. Capt.

¹ In possession of J. C. Holding, Esq., Southsea.

² Sir Edward Berry, Nelson's Captain.

Foley has this instant left me. From what Capt. Hood said I was in great hopes Capt. F. had very lately seen you—he is full of the Earl's commanding the Channel Fleet. Lord Bridport has sailed again. Our good Father received a letter yesterday from your Br William, teizing about no dignitari's for the Nelson family. I must to The Rector and beg him not to be so tiresome, for truly I am nursing and doing everything I can to make our father comfortable, and then he is quite upset by one of these Epistles. Mr. W. N. requested me to give Mr. Windham a *gentle hint*. Sir Peter and Lady Parker called yesterday. We have agreed to go and see the famous French Milliner. Lady P. declares they will put me in *sack* and send me to Bonaparté. Her spirits are good indeed. She sends Sir Peter to the Admiralty to hear when you are expected home. I don't know what she is not to do. Dance and grow young.

"We dined yesterday (Susannah, I mean) with the Hamiltons.¹ I wish I could say Mrs. Hamilton is the least modernized ; of all the Antique figures she certainly is the *Most*. Mr. Morton pais her great attention. Bob Jones tells me Forbes has got Mr. Morton to sign some *papers* for him. I long to hear what you have done for Capt. Hardy ; his character is excellent indeed.

"Our Father has received direction how to proceed

¹ Mrs. Hamilton and Mr. Morton were cousins of Lady Nelson, Mrs. Hamilton being the daughter of President Herbert, and Mr. Morton his nephew and heir.

in sending to the Stage Coach for Horace. Susannah Bolton is to go and buy Maps in St. Paul's Church Yard to amuse his Children. Our good Father's love to you and Blessing.

"God Bless and Protect my Dearest Husband.

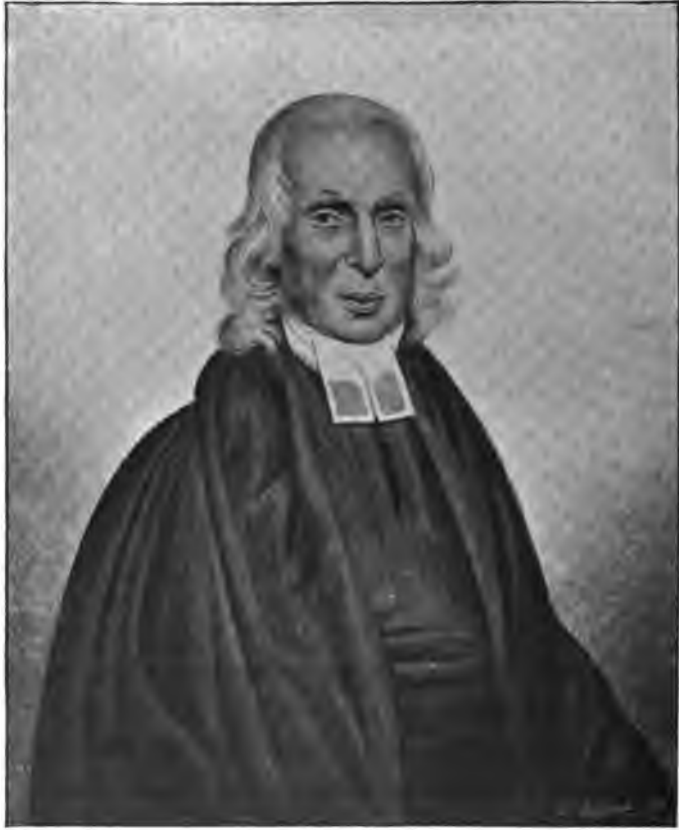
"Believe me y^r affectionate Wife,

"FRANCES H. NELSON."

A foolish, unsympathetic letter to a man of Nelson's temperament, so ardently devoted to his profession ; she seems not capable of realising that even then her glorious husband might have fallen in the uncertainty of warfare, for aught she knew.

The Rev. Edmund Nelson early in 1800 received a bequest from his sister Mary. Lady Nelson, who invariably reported to her distant husband whatever transpired in the family circle to annoy him, took advantage of a letter written on this occasion to the Rev. Edmund Nelson, by his son the Rev. W. Nelson, to apprise her husband that "the Rector writes to his father, 'Knowing you were left everything, Mrs. Nelson or myself never made use of any undue influence with my Aunt in her last illness,' and in the same letter hopes with your father's assistance to purchase the house which is left to Mrs. Rolfe,¹ as she intends selling it. Our father observed the

¹ Alice, sister of the Rev. Edmund Nelson, married in 1760 the Rev. Robert Rolfe, to whom her mother presented the family living of Hilborough, when the Rev. Edmund Nelson resigned it on being preferred to the Rectory of Burnham Thorpe. The Rev. R. Rolfe died in May 1785. Nelson's brother, the Rev. W. Nelson, succeeded him as Rector of Hilborough.



THE REV. EDMUND NELSON, A.M., RECTOR OF BURNHAM THORPE.

From a miniature by G. P. Harding, after an original painting by Sir W. Beechey, formerly in the possession of J. J. Smith, Esq., of Richmond, Lord Mayor of London 1810. He took over Lady Hamilton's house and effects at Richmond.

necessity of committing the Rector's letter to the flames, which I think he has done."

In a remarkable way Lady Nelson looked after her own interest, although in no way generous to her

husband's relatives. It runs through all the correspondence that Mr. Thomas Bolton had not large means, and Lord Nelson assisted with the education of his nephew, Tom Bolton, and made his sister an annual allowance. Yet we find Lady Nelson telling her good-natured husband "y^r sister assured us Mr. Bolton was *quite easy* and happy in his *circumstances*," followed by, "I have ordered a suit of cloths for her Majesty's birthday. I am frightened to tell you the expense of your new chariot—nothing fine about it, only fashionable—£352, harness, etc., for one pair of horses."

At the end of 1799 Captain Hardy was in England. On a visit one day to Lady Nelson he told her that her husband would be gratified if she sent Lady Hamilton anything, which, considering the many obligations Lady Nelson was under to her for sick nursing, could scarcely be met, as an equivalent, by "a cap and kerchief *such* as are worne this *cold weather*." In her next letter she hoped Lady Hamilton would "like her cap. All I can say, it's the whim of the moment."

Lady Nelson's spelling was not always perfect. She would write that the sight of Captain Hardy and Lieutenant Leahey had put her in good spirits "in spight of the rhumatism," or of a "*sail* of property." Her letters show no interest whatever in her husband's venturesome life, but are written as to one who knew nothing of risk. What would Lord Nelson care to hear of "so many new fashions in visiting that were I to attempt to give you an idea it would fill a sheet" ?

Throughout his correspondence from Naples Nelson had been perfectly open and affectionate with Lady Nelson—witness his letter from Palermo, April 10th, 1799: “Nothing but the situation of affairs in this country has kept me from England; and if I have the happiness of seeing their Sicilian Majesties safe on their throne again, it is probable I shall yet be home in the summer. Good Sir William, Lady Hamilton, and myself are the mainsprings of the machine which manage what is going on in this country. We are all bound to England when we can quit our posts with propriety.” The accounts of Sir William Hamilton fully endorse the truthfulness of this sentence of Nelson’s, that these three worked—while the King played.

On the arrival of Lord Nelson in London, after the first welcomes were over, he left Nerot’s Hotel, and with Lady Nelson took a furnished house in Dover Street, where his Lordship very naturally wished to enjoy the society of his relatives and their children. During his absence from England Lady Nelson had kept aloof from his brother and sisters, and now that her husband’s presence compelled her to admit them, her chilling reception marred the pleasure of their visits. Lord Nelson’s father had lived with her as a matter of united economy, for which he paid his share. The Rev. William Nelson and his amiable wife were frequently mortified by her distant manner even when seated as guests at her table. Nelson was never happier than in the company of children, but his romps with his nephews and nieces jarred on my lady’s nerves

and produced fits of bad temper. Her attachment to her own son caused her to regard the young children of Nelson's sisters and brother as interlopers in her son's way, whom she regarded as rightful heir to all her husband's property. But Nelson was in no mood to consider him worthy of reward, and by way of retort Josiah Nisbet alienated his mother from her husband, until her jealous temperament vented itself alike against his relations and the Hamiltons. These differences grew in frequency. And all this misunderstanding happened within two months of the day Nelson set foot in England, hoping to enjoy a well-earned rest. William Beckford, Esq., of Fonthill, Wiltshire, sent an invitation to Sir William and Lady Hamilton and Lord Nelson (not including Lady Nelson) to visit him, which they accepted, making a right royal progress on the road, entertained at every city through which they passed, while William Beckford himself organised one of the most sumptuous series of repasts possible to conceive, and invited a most select company to partake of it in their honour. We now approach a period vital to the reputation of Emma Lady Hamilton, and the scene at Fonthill must be closely watched and well considered.

It will be necessary here to explain that in the first week of February in the year 1801, Lady Hamilton took an infant girl and confided her to the care of a Mrs. Gibson, in Little Titchfield Street, giving no information concerning the child save that she, the nurse, would be well paid for the care of it. This child was the little Horatia, Nelson's adopted daughter,

and after noting the performances of Lady Hamilton before guests who numbered among them several Royal Academicians, the question proposed for consideration is, *Could Lady Hamilton have appeared, wearing a cambric robe made in the simplest Greek style, to the satisfaction of that critical audience on December 23rd, 1800, and placed a newborn child of her own at nurse in the first week of February 1801?*¹

The lengthy account of this fête at Fonthill is to be found in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for April 1801,² but it is proposed to insert in these pages a few extracts from a somewhat similar description jointly written by the daughters of the host, Misses Mary and Susan Beckford, to their cousin.

One of the pleasures of that accomplished woman, the Lady Anne Hamilton, was the collecting of interesting and valuable original documents. That which described the Revels at Fonthill in honour of Nelson was of course a welcome addition to her cabinet, and it was carefully preserved by her; not as priceless testimony in defence of the honour of Lady Hamilton was it laid aside, but as a family document of historical interest. The writers were her cousins, one of whom in future years was to become her sister-in-law by marrying Alexander, Duke of Hamilton. This important letter tells of some graceful exhibitions by Lady Hamilton; and after its perusal and reflecting on the refined social and artistic company assembled, who

¹ Horatia is thought to have been born towards the end of January.

² The Fonthill Revels can also be read in the *Memoirs of Emma Lady Hamilton*, by Mrs. Gamlin.

but a person of the most stubborn nature would persist in still connecting Horatia with Lady Hamilton by natural ties? Under any circumstances the correspondence known as "the Thompson Letters" with their mysterious allusions could have no personal connection with Lady Hamilton.

Extracts from a joint letter written by the Misses Beckford to Lady Anne Hamilton, dated December 29th, 1800.

"DEAREST COUSIN,—We mentioned in our last an invitation our Father had given Lord Nelson, Sir William and Lady Hamilton, etc., to Fonthill. You will probably have read in the Newspapers that Lord Nelson was, in passing through Salisbury, presented with the freedom of that City, with the usual Ceremonies on such occasions, and afterwards escorted by its associated Cavalry to some distance on the road to Fonthill. As soon as the Party reached the Lodge of the Park the Fonthill Volunteers, already waiting, presented their Arms, and, dividing, proceeded on either side of the carriages in slow procession up to the house, the Band playing 'Rule Britannia.' Here our Father and a large number of Ladies and Gentlemen received them on the Landing of the great flight of Steps to the Marble Hall.

"When the music had played 'God save the King' the Volunteers drew out upon the Lawn, and, after performing several Evolutions, fired several rounds in honour of the noble Admiral. The Company now going into the House at six O'Clock sat down to

dinner. During the Deserts Lady Hamilton, Banti, and Sapio sang 'God save the King,' 'Rule Britannia,' the company joining in chorus. Then followed some charming Duettos by the Ladies. As soon as coffee had gone round Sapio placed himself at the pianoforte, when a variety of vocal pieces were performed, and one of them a Trio of Papa's Composition. It is enough to say that every body was delighted with that and the whole of the music. The Company then split into parties of Cards, Conversation, or Music, and the Day concluded with Supper at Twelve, and, after it, Music till bedtime. The Mornings were spent in seeing the House, Paintings, Library, and in such Excursions out of doors as the weather permitted. Dinners, Music, Suppers, etc., as on the first day, occupied their proper share of Sunday and Monday. On Tuesday the Festivities were transferred from the Mansion House to the Abbey."

This last remark means that for the next entertainments the company were driven from the house where Beckford was residing, to Fonthill Abbey, which was then but partly built, but where the devices for the astonishment and pleasure of the guests were in full accordance with the genius of the host. Eleven carriages carried the party, who started at five o'clock; the shades of night were advancing as they took their places and drove slowly until they reached the triumphal arch but just finished under the direction of Wyatt, Beckford's architect. Here they passed through a winding road amid thick fir and pine trees, brightly illuminated with innumerable lamps hung in the trees,

and flambeaux that accompanied the carriages, which proceeded between two lines of the Fonthill Volunteers, their band playing military airs. Arrived at the quaint erection called the "Abbey" the effects were very fine—the countless lights contrasting with the solemn gloom of the battlements and turrets, and playing with weird changes on the sombre walls, while the rolling of small drums echoed from the surrounding hills. Soldiers lined the entrance hall. The company were shown into a large saloon, called the "Cardinal's parlour"; the dining-table extended the whole length of the room. The guests sat down, and a repast of excellent fare was served in old monastic style, amid general admiration and good humour, much to the contentment of Lord Nelson, in whose honour they had all assembled at Beckford's summons. As Dr. Lettice, Beckford's travelling tutor, said, this original entertainment was given by the brightest Genius to the greatest Hero of the kingdom.

In resuming quotations from the Misses Beckford, it is particularly requested that the social standing and mental capacity of the witnesses, who sat as audience while Lady Hamilton gratified them with a play in dumb show or *tableaux vivants*, be considered. The ladies wrote: "It should not be omitted that many of the Artists whose works have contributed to the embellishment of the Abbey, with Mr. Wyatt and the President of the Royal Academy (B. West) at their head, made a part of the Company.

"These Gentlemen, with the distinguished Musical Party before mentioned and some eminent characters of

the Literary World, formed altogether a combination of Talent and Genius not often meeting at the same place."

Present writers, however, would limit the powers of observation of this unique assembly if the condition of Lady Hamilton was as they would have us believe.

The dinner ended the company adjourned to the finished rooms of the Abbey, lighted on the stair-cases by figures dressed in the monastic robes of the Picoilo-Frati, holding *bougies*. As they entered an immense room wherein was a shrine beautifully adorned, and lit with candles in gold and silver candlesticks, grand religious music was solemnly played from behind the curtains of the shrine. Here tea and coffee were served while chairs were placed in the room where they had dined; a large vacant space was left in front of the chairs which were occupied by the company, and the show upon which depends so much commenced. Beckford's daughters tell the story.

"The Assembly no sooner occupied the chairs than Lady Hamilton appeared in the character of Agrippina bearing the ashes of Germanicus in a Golden Urn, and presenting herself before the Roman People with the design of inciting them to revenge the Death of her husband, who after having been declared Emperor of the East by Tiberius fell a victim to his Envy, and is supposed to have been poisoned by his order at the head of the Forces he was conducting against the rebellious Armenians.

"She displayed with Truth and Energy every Gesture, Attitude, and Expression which could be conceived to have been the best exhibited in Agrippina

to move the passion of the Romans in behalf of their favourite general. The Action of her hands and arms in the various positions of the Urn, or her manner of presenting it before the Romans, or of holding it up to the Gods in the act of prayer, was most classically graceful.

“Every change of dress, principally of the Head, to suit the different situations in which she successively presented herself, was performed instantaneously and with a most perfect care, without retiring or even turning aside a moment from the Company. In the last scene of this beautiful piece of Pantomime she appeared with a young lady of the Company who was to personate a Daughter. Her action in this part was so perfectly natural and just and pathetically addressed to the Spectators, as to draw Tears from several of the Company, and it may be questioned whether this Scene without Theatrical Assistance of Characters and appropriate circumstances could possibly be presented with more effect.

“This having finished, Lady Hamilton after a short interval personated An Abbess receiving two Nuns into her Convent ; two young ladies of the Company extremely well chosen for the purpose, acted the Nuns, Lady Hamilton performing her Character with the greatest truth and propriety.

“The Company, greatly delighted, now broke up, and departed about eleven to sup at the mansion.

“Before we close our letter we have to request your acceptance of a trifling token of our friendship and affection in a pair of bracelets with our own hair for

yourself, and one for Lady Susan, which we hope you will receive on the first day of the new Century. With our kindest love to Lady Susan and best Compliments to the Duke,

"We remain ever, Dearest Cousin, your Truly Affectionate and Sincere Friends,

"M. & S. BECKFORD.

"TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF HAMILTON,

"*Hamilton Palace, North Britain.*

"FOR LADY ANNE."

That Lady Hamilton should have selected such a subject for representation as an abbess receiving two pure young creatures into her convent, just at the time her own reputation was to be assailed, is a strange fact, and is surely important evidence to her advantage.

Persons of position who knew the parentage of Horatia absolutely denied Lady Hamilton's connection with it, and the incidents in the foregoing letter are sufficiently strong to exonerate Lady Hamilton from the charge of becoming her mother within five weeks of such gratifying performances before a highly cultured and critical public. Years afterwards, when Horatia herself was married, she questioned Mr. Haslewood as to who was her mother. Mr. Haslewood had been Nelson's solicitor and in his entire confidence. His reply was, that if he told her it might destroy the happiness of a then united and happy family, but it was *not* Lady Hamilton. More might be quoted, but familiarised with the part performed by Lady Hamilton at the Fonthill Revels before the great of the land, the highest

artists and brightest literary geniuses of our country, we may rightly decide that no female could have caused tears to flow by any performance before them to be followed so closely by maternity, had such a case existed.

Whatsoever relations Lady Hamilton observed towards Horatia, it seems best to honour her for faithful execution of a voluntary duty as guardian, and to pity her that her traducers should have found in it an unreasonable cause to strengthen their malice against her.

The Misses Beckford state that their father invited Lord Nelson to accompany the Hamiltons to Fonthill for Christmas 1800; and that he did so unaccompanied by Lady Nelson was no doubt the death-blow to all chance of happiness between Lord Nelson and his wife. A certain amount of sympathy must be extended to Lady Nelson for this seeming slight, which led to her husband's going away in the company she strongly objected to; but Lady Nelson does not seem to have been included in the invitation to Fonthill "to enjoy a few days of repose uncontaminated by the sight and prattle of drawing-room parasites."

Mr. Beckford invited the Hamiltons and Lord Nelson in order to talk over with them a scheme he hoped could be carried out by his relative Sir William Hamilton to their mutual satisfaction and advantage.

The sad differences between Lord and Lady Nelson on his return to London increased daily, until they reached a climax that can be related no better than by one who was present, namely Mr. William Haslewood,

Nelson's solicitor. It will be seen that from one cause and another the separation which followed was entirely due to Lady Nelson. The letter that contains the account of the unfortunate affair was written by Mr. Haslewood to Sir Harris Nicolas from Kemp Town, Brighton, dated April 13th, 1846, when Sir Harris Nicolas was seeking information in order to insert as accurately as possible the true story in his great work *Lord Nelson's Letters and Dispatches*. It is here copied.

“DEAR SIR,—I was no less surprised than grieved when you told me of a prevailing opinion that Lord Nelson of his own motion withdrew from the society of his wife and took up his residence with Sir William and Lady Hamilton, and that you have never received from any member of his family an intimation to the contrary. His father, his brother Dr. Nelson (afterwards Earl Nelson), his sisters Mrs. Bolton and Mrs. Matcham and their husbands, well knew that the separation was unavoidable on Lord Nelson's part, and as I happened to be present when the unhappy rupture took place I have often talked over with all of them, but more especially with Mr. and Mrs. Matcham, the particulars which I proceed to relate in justice to the memory of my illustrious friend, and in the hope of removing an erroneous impression from your mind.

“In the winter of 1800-1801 I was breakfasting with Lord and Lady Nelson at their lodgings in Arlington Street, and a cheerful conversation was

passing on indifferent subjects when Lord Nelson spoke of something that had been done or said by 'dear Lady Hamilton,' upon which Lady Nelson rose from her chair and exclaimed with much vehemence, 'I am sick of hearing of dear Lady Hamilton and am resolved that you shall give up either her or me.' Lord Nelson with perfect calmness said, 'Take care, Fanny, what you say. I love you sincerely ; but I cannot forget my obligations to Lady Hamilton or speak of her otherwise than with affection and admiration.' Without one soothing word or gesture, but muttering something about her mind being made up, Lady Nelson left the room, and shortly after drove from the house. They never lived together afterwards. I believe that Lord Nelson took a formal leave of her Ladyship before joining the Fleet under Sir Hyde Parker ; but that to the day of her husband's glorious death she never made any apology for her abrupt and ungente conduct above related, or any overture towards a reconciliation.

" I am, dear Sir, your faithful servant,
" W. HASLEWOOD."



LADY HAMILTON.

*From a miniature by S. Shelley, lent by
J. C. Holding, Esq., Southsea.*

How could Lord Nelson be forgetful of his obligations? The very letters written after his two first departures from Naples show the kindnesses experienced at the house of the Hamiltons. On March 27th, 1794, he wrote to Sir William : "I beg leave to present my most respectful compliments to Lady Hamilton, as does also my youngster [Josiah Nisbet]. I assure you and her Ladyship that I remember with gratitude both your kindnesses to a stranger." To Lady Parker, after leaving Naples recovered from the fever into which he fell after the Battle of the Nile, he wrote : "After the Action, I had near fell into a decline, but at Naples my invaluable friends Sir William and Lady Hamilton nursed and set me up again." And his wife asked him to forget these obligations !

Seeing that Lady Nelson had gone away, Sir William asked Nelson to put up at their house during his leave of absence, while his outfit was looked up. "But," said Nelson, "what will the world say?" "A fig for what the world says," replied the old knight. "I have lived too long to care what the world says. We have a room to spare, have we not, Emma? and your Lordship has but to say the word." So with the Hamiltons Nelson passed the few days he had to spare in London before joining the fleet at Plymouth, which he did on January 13th, 1801. He had an interview with Lady Nelson before he started, and though he wrote her a short kind note from Southampton on the same day, making no allusions to their differences, but opening the way for reconciliation, Lady Nelson never replied to it. How the current of

events might have changed had she done so ! For just at this time Nelson showed no disposition to remain in the company of Sir William and Lady Hamilton, but was preparing again for sea life and absence from his friends. Separation from the Hamiltons might have cooled the friendship at which Lady Nelson looked askance.

Admiral Collingwood was at Plymouth expecting Mrs. Collingwood, and an extract written to his father-in-law, Mr. Blackett, shows that there was no planned intention that Nelson should reside with the Hamiltons for good. Admiral Collingwood was anxious to extend to Nelson the same hospitality that the Hamiltons did eventually. Circumstances threw Nelson on the Hamiltons' kind care, but his becoming an inmate of their household was no act of premeditation. The Admiral's letter, dated January 25th, 1801, says : " Lord Nelson is here, and I think he will probably come and live with me when the weather will allow him ; but he does not get in and out of Ships well with one arm. He gave me an account of his reception at Court, which was not flattering after having been the adoration of that of Naples. His Majesty merely asked him if he had recovered his health, and then without waiting for an answer turned to General —— and talked to him near half an hour in great good humour : it could not be about his *successes*."

Lord Nelson had never intended to resume sea life when he returned to England in November 1800 ; to settle down quietly and regain his health was his fondest hope. He detested the entertainments to

which he and the Hamiltons were asked and which were more to their taste ; these ended, he and his wife would have taken a small house in the country, while Sir William and Lady Hamilton remained in town. This resolution is distinctly forecast in the written instructions to Mr. Davison by Lord Nelson from Vienna, September 20th, 1800 :—

“MY DEAR DAVISON,—As the time of my arrival draws near I must request the favour of you and my brother to take either a house or good lodgings for me—not too large, yet one fit for my situation, to be hired by the month, not even which time will I remain in London. You must consider I am not rich beyond what you are acquainted with, for all my Sicilian revenue is for two years to come laid out on that Country ; therefore do not exceed what is right.”

In due time the memory of the scenes in which Nelson and the Hamiltons had played leading parts would have faded, and each family would have gone their separate paths : the one seeking rest and quietude, amply satisfied with the company of his wife when the public welcomes accorded to him were silenced ; the other taking an active part in society, where the individual accomplishments of Sir William and Lady Hamilton would be appreciated. Nelson actually returned to sea life to avoid the daily annoyances which he met with. After one scene more distressing than usual he left the house at night and roamed through the streets in a state of mind bordering on distraction. He rambled as far as the City, through

Fleet Market, over Blackfriars Bridge, and at last reached the house of the Hamiltons in Piccadilly at four o'clock in the morning, where he obtained admission and broke down in an agonised torrent of tears. Sir William and his wife did their best to soothe him. They induced him to take refreshment and rest. He slept upon the sofa, and in the morning had a serious talk with Sir William, who advised him to return to sea life again as soon as possible, as he was not likely to find peace in his own home. A fortnight later he departed to command the *San Josef*. Nelson in no way anticipated an absolute separation, as his letter from Southampton signed with affection shows, and furthermore on January 24th he wrote to Mr. Davison regarding reports that had reached him that Mr. Davison was about to buy a fine house for him. He says, "I do not believe Lady Nelson can have desired any such thing, for where am I to get the money? and if I had ever so much I should not think of a house at this time. The best thing for Lady N. when she is in Town is good lodgings; next to that to hire a very small ready-furnished house."

Miserable indeed must have poor Nelson been just at this juncture: the cabin of the *St. George*, to which he was temporarily appointed, filthy and leaking; his chief in command, Sir Hyde Parker, sulky and not speaking a word to him although on board the same ship, and the slight was observed by all. Indeed, Nelson was unaware as to whether or not he was to go to the Baltic, so reticent was Sir Hyde Parker. Again, he was in anxiety about a law-suit he was engaged

in against Earl St. Vincent relative to prize money; and, worse than all, his wife's behaviour to him had been irritating when it should have been sympathetic. Nelson applied to Lord St. Vincent for three days' leave of absence to attend to his private affairs; this was granted on February 24th. On reaching London he found that Lady Nelson had given up her house in London without sending him any intimation, and had gone to Brighton, leaving no address. He had gone to London for his outfit, and in the dilemma of her absence he went to the Hamiltons, and then it was Sir William, who knew how much his friend Lord Nelson had had to contend with since he came to England, asked him to put up at his house.

On March 2nd, 1801, Lord Nelson advised Mr. Davison: "I have requested Lady Hamilton to order some things for me and desired the bills to be sent to you. Will you have the goodness to pay them?"

The three days' leave of absence expired, and the Admiral returned to his ship to prepare for immediate departure for the Baltic. On February 28th he wrote to Admiral Lutwidge, Commander-in-Chief in the Downs:—

"MY DEAR ADMIRAL,¹—I am sorry my state of health is so indifferent as, together with the swell alongside, to prevent me without serious inconvenience paying you and Mrs. Lutwidge my personal respects, and which both duty, gratitude, and inclination so much requires me to perform, but I know your

¹ In possession of the Misses Poole, Alsager.

goodness will forgive my remaining on board. Capt. Hardy will show you my orders and receive any you may please to communicate. I trust to your goodness in directing the pilot Boat to be sent to us this night with the Canonades, with a good Pilot for Yarmouth, as I hope to sail in the night or at daylight in the morning. With my best respects to Mrs. Lutwidge, believe me for ever

“Your obliged and grateful

“NELSON AND BRONTE.”

Meanwhile Sir William Hamilton was sorely distressed by his financial position ; for the sudden recall to England, following the loss of property during disasters at Naples, left him in circumstances bordering on destitution. He therefore applied for a pension in consideration of his services for thirty-six years, and appealed for remuneration for losses sustained while holding the post of Ambassador at Naples. Nelson assisted him in drawing out his claims, and made the following statement in his own handwriting :—

“*Facts.*”¹

“Four years past Sir William Hamilton had permission to come to England to settle his private affairs, and would have come with all his effects if the embroiled state of Italy and the arrival of the King’s Fleet in the Mediterranean had not made him determine, whatever inconvenience he might suffer, to remain at his post. In October 1798 part of Sir

¹ The Egerton MSS., British Museum.

William's valuable effects were sent home in the *Colossus*. By the accident which happened to that ship he suffered a loss of several thousand pounds. In December of the same year, except some pictures and vases which Lord Nelson had placed on board a transport, the whole of Sir William's effects at Naples were lost ; for although much might have been saved had his thoughts been only turned towards his own property, yet self was absorbed in attending to the preservation of a whole Royal Family ; therefore not an atom of furniture was removed, excepting one couch, no, not even a bed. It can readily be conceived what the mounting of such a house (as every person who has travelled in this country and all other nations can testify) must have cost. On Sir William's arrival at Palermo, although the Queen did more than could be expected, it became necessary to arrange a new establishment consistent with his public character. [The entertainment of] the emigrated English of Naples and Tuscany, with many other persons of high rank in the world, together with the constant communication with the Navy, necessarily brought on a very heavy expense, for there was no house to resort to but the British Minister's. The settling this new establishment, together with the closing the accounts on his being superseded, cost, by bills drawn upon London, £13,213 between August 1799 and June 1800, besides all losses, which cannot be estimated at less than £10,000 sterling."

Lord Nelson knew only too well the difficulties

under which Sir William Hamilton had laboured for want of cash, though he had always expected that the losses which had accrued through the holding of an official position during the misfortunes of war would be amply refunded by the nation represented.

Sir William's position can be understood better by reading a codicil to a will made by Lord Nelson when he was smarting under his differences with his wife.

The codicil¹ written by Lord Nelson, dated March 6th, 1801, reads thus:—

“Whereas the Right Hon^{ble} Sir William Hamilton, K.B., is in my debt the following sums, viz.: nine hundred and twenty-seven pounds lent him at Palermo in January 1799; also the sum of two hundred and fifty-five, lent him between July and November 1800; also one thousand and ninety-four pounds (being half an expense from Leghorn to London in 1800), making in the whole the sum of two thousand two hundred and seventy-six pounds, I give this debt afore mentioned in trust to Thomas Ryder, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn, and Alexander Davison, Esq., of St. James's Square, for the use and benefit of Emma Hamilton, to be disposed of as she may direct, and I likewise request that my friends Thomas Ryder, Esq., and Alexander Davison, Esq., will execute the office of executors to my will made fifth March 1801, and that they will each accept of one hundred pounds to buy a ring; and it is my directions that the sum necessary to pay Lady Nelson the sum of one thousand pounds a year (which I

¹ The Morrison MSS.

calculate will be twenty thousand pounds) be at her death equally divided as directed by will. Given on board his Majesty's Ship *Saint George* at sea, March 16th, one thousand eight hundred and one.

"NELSON AND BRONTE.

"Witness,

T. M. Hardy, Captain H.M.S. *St. George*.

Frederick Thesiger, Captain in the Royal Navy."¹

Nelson had for the two days prior to executing this codicil been drawing up his will and making settlements on behalf of Lady Nelson, from whom he had, in the hope of obtaining peace of mind, deemed it best to part.

The following copy, in Nelson's autograph, of the last letter he ever addressed to his wife, carries on its surface strong evidence of the sorry conflict and wordy warfare that had waged in Nelson's household, mother and son being united aggressors.

"*St. George, March 4th, 1801.*"²

"Josiah is to have another ship and to go abroad if the *Thalia* cannot soon be got ready. I have done *all* for him, and he may again, as he has often done before, wish me to break my neck, and be abetted in it by his friends, who are likewise my enemies; but I have done my duty as an honest, generous man, and I

¹ Captain Thesiger was a volunteer at the Battle of Copenhagen, *aide-de-camp* to Nelson in the Baltic, and served with distinction in the Russian Navy against the Swedes. He died in 1805, at which time he was agent for prisoners of war at Portsmouth.

² The Morrison MSS.

neither want or wish for any body to care what becomes of me, whether I return or am left in the Baltic. Living I have done all in my power for you, and if dead, you will find I have done the same ; therefore my only wish is to be left to myself ; and wishing you every happiness, believe that I am your affectionate

“NELSON AND BRONTE.”

In the British Museum is a fragment of the above letter, which we know is part of the one received by Lady Nelson, who has, with great injustice, cut off the first part of the document because of the evidence in it of Nelson's forbearance and generosity. It is noteworthy that Nelson has written the letter in haste and misery, judging by the writing. Her Ladyship has endorsed it, writing calmly and firmly : “This is my Lord Nelson's Letter of dismissal, which so astonished me that I immediately sent it to Mr. Maurice Nelson, who was sincerely attached to me, for his advice. He desired me not to take the least notice of it, as his brother seemed to have forgot himself.”

The above-mentioned Mr. Maurice Nelson had lived in London from the age of fifteen, and held an appointment in the Navy Office given to him by his uncle Captain Maurice Suckling, Comptroller of the Navy. He died on April 24th, 1801, after a short and severe illness. A portrait of him (later in possession of the Rev. Earl William Nelson) shows him to have had more claims to good looks than any of the other gentlemen in the family.

In the year 1830 appeared some anecdotal remini-

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scences written by one of the upper social circle in the first half of the present century, which included some



MR. MAURICE NELSON.

From miniature by G. P. Harding.

incidents in the lives of Lord and Lady Nelson and Lady Hamilton. The author was in a good position to be well versed in accurate events of his day. He

also says the received opinion that Lady Hamilton was the cause of Lord Nelson separating from his wife is incorrect. The quarrel was caused by another and a very different occurrence. Lady Nelson had a son in the Navy whom she wished to get promoted. Lord Nelson refused to be a party to the proceeding, as he considered him not qualified to command after the recent exposures of his unfitness. Irritated at the refusal, Lady Nelson herself waited upon Lord Spencer to solicit his interest, and with great imprudence, the outcome of hasty temper, she divulged a professional secret which might have been very prejudicial to Lord Nelson. This was published during Lady Nelson's lifetime and never contradicted.

There are evidences of the truth of this statement to be found in different letters; for instance, from Lord Nelson to Mr. Davison, January 28th, 1801, Nelson being then in ignorance of what had transpired: "The Lady of the Admiralty never had any just cause for being cool to me. Either as a public or private [man] I wish nothing undone which I have done." Captain Mahan in his *Life of Nelson* says about this remark that "it is entirely ambiguous and misleading as regards his actual relations to Lady Hamilton." Then why introduce Lady Hamilton? The remark has the ring of honesty about it, and will surely be accepted as favourable unpremeditated evidence, curiously written on the very day when the child Horatia was said to have been born, though relating only to the then (to him) inexplicable conduct of Lady Spencer.

The Lady at the Admiralty was Lady Spencer, formerly the lovely Miss Lavinia Bingham, eldest daughter of Lord Lucan, whom Gibbon described to Lord Sheffield after seeing her at Lausanne: "She is a charming woman, who with sense and spirit has the playfulness and simplicity of a child." The Naval Commanders who frequented the Admiralty during her husband's administration felt the influence of her superior mind; they often touchingly referred to her in their letters as of one who would sympathise with them in their difficulties. She was all to them in England that Lady Hamilton was in Naples, and the gallant sea-officers valued and respected both women. Lady Spencer had the penetration to appreciate the genius of Nelson through the element of personal vanity which frequently enveloped him. When he lost his arm she presented him with a combined gold knife and fork.¹

Certain it is that, perhaps in consequence of the confidences that had been reposed in Lord Spencer by Lady Nelson, a Commander-in-Chief was sent to the Baltic over Lord Nelson. An inkling of the truth having reached his Lordship, he wrote with great evidence of trouble to Lord St. Vincent that, while he remained in the Service, his utmost exertions should be called forth. "Yet I am so circumstanced that probably this Expedition will be the last service ever performed by your obliged and affectionate friend, Nelson and Bronte."

¹ On July 15th, 1895, this interesting relic was sold at Christie's Rooms for £260.

The Earl replied trying to induce him not to cast up his post in consequence of the unpleasant situation. Nelson had apparently resolved to quit the Navy, driven to it by the disclosure. Lord St. Vincent endeavoured to encourage him, and wrote : " Be assured, my dear Lord, that every *public* act of your life has been the subject of my admiration, which I should have sooner declared but that I was appalled by the last sentence in your letter ; for God's sake do not suffer yourself to be carried away by any sudden impulse."

On March 11th, to Mr. Alexander Davison, Nelson wrote still on the same subject : " I declare solemnly that I do not know I am going to the Baltic, and much worse than that I could tell you." Under these circumstances how miserable must his situation have been in the Baltic, his ill-health still further deteriorated by home bickerings, from which, though little fitted at the time for active service, he was glad to fly.

Messrs. Clarke and McArthur in their *Life of Nelson* say that, after much recrimination on both sides, Lord Nelson took his final leave of his wife on January 13th, and when about to say farewell he remarked emphatically : " I call God to witness there is nothing in you or your conduct I wish otherwise." Their authority is not stated, but as Lady Nelson took an interest in the work we may reasonably assume her Ladyship supplied it. It is not in the least consistent with that which eight days later Lord Nelson wrote to Lady Hamilton : " I have not, I assure you, scarcely a comfort about me except the two chairs which you ordered of Mr. Foxhall, and I have wrote her [Lady

Nelson] a letter of truths about my outfit." In many unpublished items of correspondence there is much dissatisfaction expressed ; indeed, for the time being self ought to have been a secondary consideration, until the health of her husband was somewhat reinstated. Her conduct was absolutely cruel. The intimacy with the Hamiltons does not seem to have been the first cause of coolness, for though they dined with her the night they reached London, probably by Lord Nelson's desire, there was no reason why she should have dined with them in return had she wished otherwise.

After parting with Lady Nelson his Lordship drove to his ship, but on the way his carriage had to be stopped until he recovered from a spasm caused by his annoyances.

We can realise how completely the happiness of Lord Nelson's home life had been wrecked when we remember with what pleasurable anticipation he had looked forward to his return to England—before Josiah Nisbet made mischief between husband and wife—and then find that he chose to go to sea again, though in bad health, within two months of that return.

The warmest partisan of Lady Nelson cannot say it was her wifely duty to allow her husband to sail away holding such a responsible situation as second in command of a fleet bound for battle, and yet make no supervision of his wardrobe for a long sea voyage—to let him go away with broken health, caring nothing to provide him with some little comfort to make sea life bearable ! He certainly was in a

most deplorable state of health, requiring womanly sympathies and thoughtful cares ; and in the absence of these his situation was all the more unendurable on account of the state of his cabin, leaking, smelling of paint, uncomfortable in every way—so much so that he had to take refuge in Captain Hardy's cabin until his own was put somewhat in order.

It was most probably due to that letter of truths about his outfit and the annoyance of seeing her husband's relatives visiting the Hamiltons that Lady Nelson had gone off to Brighton leaving no address, when Nelson ran up to London having three days' leave of absence. So indignant was he at this conduct, so unkind and showing so little feeling, that on April 23rd, 1801, from on board the *St. George*, Nelson wrote to his staunch friend Mr. Davison, who under all circumstances would have advised for the best ; but in this case advice came not. Mr. Davison was very straightforward, and would not have refrained from kind hindrance had he deemed it the right thing. "You will at a proper time and before my arrival in England signify to Lady N. that I expect, and for which I have made such a very liberal allowance to her, to be left to myself and without any injuries from her ; for sooner than live the unhappy life I did when last I came to England I would stay abroad for ever. My mind is fixed as fate, therefore you will send my determination in any way you may think proper ; and believe me your ever obliged and faithful friend, Nelson and Bronte."

"To be left to myself and without any injuries from

her." Here again we find a wrong had been inflicted which must have been familiar to his most intimate friends and relations, not one of whom tried to alter his determination.

Nelson had experienced the greatest difficulty in obtaining the promise of resumed command for his stepson. Captain Nisbet did not, however, become the commander of the *Thalia*, which must have increased his Lordship's perplexities. Why he did not do so is explained, we think, by the following.

It may be noticed that the date is only four days later than that on which Mr. Davison was asked to advise Lady Nelson of her husband's intentions to have a separate establishment. Yet no bad feeling is evinced against Captain Nisbet—quite the reverse; and it may surely be augured that if Lady Nelson had gone the right way about it she would easily have won back the generous heart to herself.

The letter is addressed to Sir Thomas Troubridge from the *St. George*, April 27th, 1801.

"Although I know that Captain Nisbet does not care if I was dead and d—d, yet I cannot but be sorry that he is not to have the *Thalia* or some other good ship. His failings I know very well, but as I have the testimony of Duckworth and Inglefield of his improved conduct as an officer I care not what Lieut. Colquhoun may say. His mother wrote me a threatening letter that if I did not go directly and get her son made a Captain, that she would not only ruin Nisbet, but try and injure me all in her power; and

I am sorry to say that Commissioner Coffin¹ is at the bottom of it, and to her gave a private letter of mine in which I said of Nisbet what I thought, and wish'd naturally to mend his conduct by telling him.

"Thus you will see, and I wish L^d St. Vincent to see it too, that it is not love for the service, but hatred to Capt. Nisbet for removing Lieut. Colquite from the ship, and to try, by alarming me, to frighten me to recommend her son. I therefore hope that a person I never injured, but has done everything to injure me, and by *threatening* letters make me do an act, will never be promoted or employ'd by the present Board of Admiralty. The motives must strike you and the Earl most forcibly, and will point out what is proper to be done, etc."

When Lord Nelson parted from his wife in London, January 13th, 1801, he left £400 for her use. Again another £400 was transferred to her account to Whitehead & Co., account of Atwood & Co., for her Ladyship's use.

On July 2nd two Post Bills, £50 each, were sent by Nelson's bankers to Lady Nelson ; on July 31st

¹ On August 24th, 1799, from Portsmouth, Commissioner Coffin wrote Lord Nelson: "If an opportunity offers let me hear at Halifax how my young friend Colquite goes on." Nelson had taken these two into his confidence when Nisbet was given command of the *Thalia*, and in a friendly way asked Lieutenant Colquite to try and keep the young Captain to an honourable performance of his duty. This was the First Lieutenant of the *Thalia* mentioned by Admiral Duckworth, "with a string of complaints which he signified his intention of sending to your Lordship, that must (to say the least of them) quite destroy Captain Nisbet's reputation." Lieutenant Colquite was godson to Commissioner Coffin.

another for £100, September 4th £200, and so on until January 5th, 1802, when the amount she had received in twelve months was £2,000. From January 1802 Lady Nelson had an annual allowance of £1,600 settled upon her by Lord Nelson, payable in quarterly instalments, free of income tax. She had her own income also of £200 per annum interest on her uncle's legacy. By giving his wife this handsome sum Nelson shows that he was noble and generous in his dealing with her, true to the promise made to her in the days of their courtship in Nevis: "I never wished for riches but to give them to you, and my small share shall be yours to the extreme."

If Lady Nelson had only remembered the old love-letters, one of which seemed to forecast the hour that had come! "Whatever whims may sometimes take me, we are none of us perfect, and myself probably much less than you deserve."

We find no such humble admission on the part of Lady Nelson. Her married life had been comparatively happy. She had been greatly studied, and no great trials had come to test her temper, therefore calmness had prevailed; but then came the differences between Nelson and her son, in which she sided with her son, combined with her arbitrary determination that her husband should give up the society of Lady Hamilton absolutely, and render himself a laughing-stock to the fleet. The resistance warmed her Creole blood, and while her son hoped his stepfather "would break his neck," he was "aided and abetted by his friends, who are likewise my enemies."

This was written *to* Lady Nelson, not *of* her.

Her Ladyship agreeably accepted the handsome allowance, making no demur, and she and her son resided together in harmony—in fact, she never seems to have been separated from him to the end of his days. They mostly lived at fashionable resorts, at Clifton, Bath, Cheltenham, Brighton, and had a good house at Littleham, near Exmouth.

It was in no way possible that Lord Nelson could have submitted to her arbitrary dictum that he should choose between herself and Lady Hamilton. To have turned his back on Sir William and Lady Hamilton would have been a serious matter for himself, and brought upon him the execration of the whole fleet and well-deserved odium for black ingratitude.

As a public character the thing was out of the question. The whole Naval Service were aware of his and their obligations to the Ambassador and his wife when off the coast of Italy. Could Nelson have made any reply other than what he did, owning his love for his wife as his wife, and his affection and admiration for Lady Hamilton, founded on gratitude for hospitality and nursing during the serious illness which overcame him on returning to Naples after the Battle of the Nile, and the knowledge of her superior and incessant untiring efforts to aid the cause upon which he was engaged, as well as all who were distressed thereby? "Take care, Fanny, what you say. I love you sincerely, but I cannot forget my obligations to Lady Hamilton, or speak of her

otherwise than with affection and admiration"—words which in solitude might have been pondered over, bringing the assurance that her attack had been premature, and that in due time things would right themselves when the passage of time made distant the events that had brought her husband and the Hamiltons so much into each other's company.

Extracts from letters written to kind Earl St. Vincent show that common gratitude would have prohibited studied slight to Lady Hamilton. On November 3rd, 1798, Nelson feared he must give up the honourable command of the fleet owing to the violence of a cough which had come on four days after setting out to sea, and in telling his condition to the Earl he says: "I had been so well nursed by Lady Hamilton that I fancied myself perfectly recovered, but too soon found the reverse." And on November 9th in the same year he testifies to her tact and ability: "I believe Lady Hamilton has wrote you so fully (and I will answer ably) on all subjects that but little remains for me to say. Your commands respecting the Queen were executed with so much propriety that if I had never before had cause for admiration it must then have commenced. Her Ladyship and Sir William's inexpressible goodness to me are not to be told in words; and it ought to stimulate me to the noblest actions, and I feel it will."

By her extraordinary genius Lady Hamilton had inspired the painter Romney to execute his grandest works; so she instilled emulation to do grand deeds in the noble sea-commanders. Her power of

expression, her enthusiasm, sympathy, and personal interest and assistance, were of the utmost value to Nelson, who was often sore at heart owing to their absence in quarters naval where he had a right to expect them.

Lady Hamilton's birthday, April 26th, 1801, was commemorated by Nelson on board the *St. George*, Kioge Bay, by the inviting to dinner of all the Admirals and Captains, to the number of twenty-four, who he says had the happiness of knowing her and experiencing her kindness when in the Mediterranean. What then would those Admirals and Captains have said (who *did* attend and drink Lady Hamilton's health) if Nelson had made that gathering the occasion to inform them that he was under the order of his wife to sever acquaintance with their old friend?

What justifiable right had Lady Nelson to demand the exclusion of Lady Hamilton from the entertainments Lord Nelson and herself attended? Nelson never forgot that Lady Hamilton had shared the risks of his sea life and helped him when possible. His praise was excessive and certainly required much toning down; but arbitrary dictation was not the way to guide him, and all the tribulation that followed was the outcome of Lady Nelson's having taken the wrong course.

Nelson's reproof before Mr. Haslewood was solemn in its sincerity, and should have satisfied her that she was first and foremost in her husband's affection. How honourably did he provide for her in his lifetime and by will, upright in all things, sharing with her as it was right to share with his wife—retaining as his

portion only about half his income, most of which he intended to dispense, as always, in charitable gifts. Noble Nelson !

The relatives of the Admiral quite approved of the course he took at this unfortunate juncture. Lady Nelson, to her husband's great regret, extended no hospitality to them when they assembled in town to see their famous brother on his return from foreign fighting.

In the *Dictionary of National Biography* we are told that Lady Nelson always was honoured with the friendship of the Rev. William Nelson, and that this continued after he became Earl Nelson, which is scarcely consistent with his writing that he did not know whether "a certain Viscountess was expected at Burnham or not" (his father's vicarage), or with his calling her son, Captain Nisbet, *the Cub* : "It is better the Cub did not speak to Mrs. N., as trouble might come of it"—meaning trouble with his mother for having spoken to Mrs. William Nelson.

Lady Hamilton's household occupations and social duties were far more arduous in January and February 1801, than could possibly have been undertaken by any invalid.

The backwardness of Government in recouping Sir William Hamilton for losses sustained in Italy during the revolution in December 1798 left him without the means to commence housekeeping in London in 1801. In this dilemma Lady Hamilton at once resolved to part with her beautiful jewels which had been given to her by foreign powers, and by their realisation she was enabled to furnish a house for her husband and

herself at No. 23, Piccadilly. What must this personal sacrifice have entailed on the part of a woman, independently of their having been grateful acknowledgments for able assistance in very trying times?

The cost of setting up the house in Piccadilly was roughly made out by Lord Nelson when assisting Sir William Hamilton to draw up a statement of necessary costs incurred in replacing to some extent their property lost at Naples. Pictures, table linen, household linen, furniture, etc., all went or were left behind in the flight, as well as the classical collections accumulated by Sir William, the loss of which alone would have been trying to the old antiquarian who had taken so much pleasure in their acquirement.¹

In the Egerton MSS. in the British Museum is the rough calculation made by Lord Nelson of what this wifely duty of Lady Hamilton cost.

Laid out for Sir William.

£1,000 to Mr. Stephens for lease.

£600 more for furniture.

£500 Green and Ward for Plate.

£300 for Household Linnen.

£300 for Coach, etc.

£350 Mr. Foxhall for furniture.

• about £200 glass, crockery ware.

about £100 kitchen furniture.

about £300 for Wine, Coals, etc.

about £300 for keeping the House for two months.

¹ In 1806 Lady Hamilton said she left at Naples property worth £9,000, and Sir W. Hamilton property worth £30,000.

Nelson's Friendships

£37 to Sapio the Musick Master.

£60 to Baldi.

£28 to French Cook.

£40 for Decking out the House.

The total spent by her Ladyship arising from the sale of her jewels was £3,588.¹

The large sums paid to Sapio and Baldi were for their performances before guests at the musical evenings given by the Hamiltons. For a time they were the lions of a certain set. Mrs. Cosway for instance, the wife of the miniature painter and herself an excellent artist, whose entertainments were unrivalled, was one of the first to ask them to her delightful reunions.

The household effects therefore being practically the property of Lady Hamilton, it was but a matter of right that they should be settled upon her in case of Sir William's death. Accordingly a deed was drawn up to that effect which Sir William asked the Rev. Louis Dutens to deliver into the keeping of Mr. Alexander Davison.

Thinking it possible that Mr. Davison might be out when he called, Mr. Dutens went provided with a letter which explained his mission, and as Mr. Davison was absent it was left with the servant. It was thus worded :—

" 119, MOUNT ST., BERKELEY SQUARE,

" *February 17, 1801.*

" I did myself the honour to wait on you to deliver to you a deed signed by Sir William Hamilton declaring

¹ The diamonds given by the Queen of Naples to Lady Hamilton were said at the time to be worth £30,000.



MRS. COSWAY.

Autotype from a miniature by Richard Cosway.

that all the furniture now in his house belongs to Lady Hamilton.

“As it was not convenient for Sir William to buy

the furniture, plate, etc., necessary to them, Lady Hamilton sold her diamonds for that purpose, and Sir William thought a justice due to her to execute the deed which accompanies this, and desired me to have it drawn up, and I suppose he told you he had appointed you as trustee for Lady Hamilton in this particular case.

"Under the uncertainty of finding you at home I write this to inform you, sir, of the purport of my visit, and I leave the deed with your servant, asking it as a favour to acknowledge the receipt of it.

"I have the honour to be," etc., etc.

With what a bold front may not the traducers of Lady Hamilton be met who desperately endeavour to fix upon her the birth of Horatia Nelson Thompson at the end of January. How could she have actively supervised such work with the dread of the momentary disclosure of a concealed motherhood occurring less than a fortnight previous to the signing of the deed which was an acknowledgment of her generous act of self-sacrifice?

That Lady Hamilton was occupied in the arrangement of her house during the time Pettigrew has portioned for the birth of Horatia we have proof. When Lord Nelson bade adieu to his wife in London on January 13th, 1801, she went to enjoy her favourite seaside residence at Brighton, perfectly heedless that her brave and delicate husband proceeded to a damp and filthy cabin in his ship, unprovided by her with one single comfort for his voyage. On January 21st he wrote, as we have seen, to Lady Hamilton, who was

immersed in her own household cares : " I have not got, I assure you, scarcely a comfort about me except the two chairs which you ordered of Mr. Foxhall. I have wrote her [Lady Nelson] a letter of truths about my outfit." The date of this letter proves that the workmen would be in possession of the house in Piccadilly at the end of January 1801. Mr. Foxhall was then engaged in fitting up the house for Sir William Hamilton purchased by the sale of Lady Hamilton's jewels, which work was certainly in hand before the birth of Horatia. Now the chairs ordered from Mr. Foxhall were merely a considerate and thoughtful offering for an invalid, and in common honesty to her Ladyship it must be remarked that she sacrificed gems of sufficient value to furnish a whole house for her husband, while Lord Nelson got only two chairs.

An ample proof also exists in the deed testified to by Mr. Dutens that the engagements of Lady Hamilton in January and February must have been those of a busy woman. Her absence would surely have attracted attention, and some one would have commented on it. In the short space of six weeks she selected furniture and plate, and made the house all that it should be. The work could not have been performed had her situation been that insinuated by Pettigrew, an insinuation continued with even more virulence and cruel spleen by Nelsonian biographers who have followed in his wake; for the strain of thought could have had but one result—fever.

Earnest research has disclosed that the fair fame of

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Lord Nelson should be upheld in justice by his old friend John Bull, of whom he wrote : " John Bull has always had faith in me, and I am grateful." John Bull will at least not allow the inevitable destruction of the moral reputation of the great naval chief, without giving an honest hearing to both sides of the question.

The possession of so many valuable gems by Lady Hamilton shows that it is quite possible she did make the personal sacrifices for the relief of the starving Maltese which she claimed to have done, though our Government ignored her pretensions, and writers still scoff at her for entering it on the statement she made to lay before the Ministers of our country, when she appealed for the means to subsist in respectability as the widow of an Ambassador who was our honourable representative at Naples for thirty-six years. The Emperor Paul of Russia recognised that she had done great service to the Maltese, and rewarded her. She had personally to refund money borrowed to buy corn.

An insulting attack upon her truthfulness for stating that she did so is unfair in the face of the unquestionable evidence to hand of the unselfish parting with her womanly vanities in order to assist her husband in putting a home together when his income was so limited as to prohibit his doing so.

In March 1801 Sir William Hamilton disposed of a large portion of his pictures and vases at the rooms of Messrs. Christie, realising £5,025 13s. 0d. A second sale of vases was arranged to take place on May 2nd and 3rd, preceded by ten days' private and

public views. But on April 3rd Mr. Thomas Hope offered to purchase the whole lot for £4,000 down (£5,000 had been asked), and this Sir William accepted.¹ "Finding that I could get no more, and considering trouble, risk, and then a little vanity in the collection being kept entire which I made with such pains, I struck with him, and then went with him to George St. (where the vases were under repair) and gave him the keys of all the padlocks; and now he is to manage as well as he can with fractures, etc., and I have been with Christie to inform him, but the advertisement was gone. He will publish another to inform the public that the collection has been disposed of by private contract, by which means they will not be dispersed, but remain together for the inspection of the learned antiquaries and artists. I saw Christie was disappointed, but upon the whole I have done prudently."

Arrangements were then made with Mr. Christie to sell the remainder of Sir William's pictures on April 17th and 18th. He had no alternative but to do this in order to realise enough for the forming of a sufficient income.²

The friends of the Hamiltons hoped to see Sir William presented with a lucrative berth, of which there were some open—one that he would have filled with competency while at the same time an income was afforded him by it. A rumour was in circulation about June 1801 that Sir William was to be appointed Governor of Malta, hearing which Captain Thomas

¹ The Morrison MSS.

² Sir W. Hamilton had an income from his Milford property, but it does not appear to have been sufficient.

Louis of the *Minotaur*, off Alexandria, hastened to congratulate Lady Hamilton. He was one of Nelson's favourite captains. His letter is faithful and affectionate, and is one more testimony to the extensive courtesy shown to the officers of the British fleet by the British Ambassador and his wife at Naples. Captain Louis says: "I shall ever acknowledge the many kind attentions shown me by you and Sir William, and I often, very often regret the change that has taken place, and most sincerely hope the new appointment of Sir William Hamilton will answer his expectation, and which I most sincerely congratulate you both upon. The Governorship of Malta which we are informed for certain is given to Sir William, may he live many years to enjoy it, and you to partake of every comfort. No doubt by the time he comes out we shall have peace, and with a little of your good management things may be brought round in this country to make it pleasant once more."

The rumour unfortunately was not realised; the governorship was bestowed on Sir Alexander Ball, one of Lord Nelson's staunch friends, and the one sent with other deputies to Sir William to try and obtain succour for the starving Maltese, in consequence of which Lady Hamilton moved to their assistance promptly and energetically. Soon after his appointment Sir Alexander Ball wrote to Lady Hamilton: "The Deputies often talk of the kind attention and hospitality with which they were honoured by your Ladyship, Sir William, and Lord Nelson."

On October 9th, 1801, the ex-Ambassador had not

been recouped, and wrote to his nephew about his hopes of recompense for lost property: "I know not what I am to receive from the Treasury, nor when, but a few thousands at my command will always be agreeable and prevent the dread I have of being dunned in my old age."

A most important epoch in the life of Lord Nelson has now been reached—that in which the child he adopted appears on the scene. In 1848 Dr. T. J. Pettigrew published a *Life of Nelson*. By some means he had acquired many letters apparently in the handwriting of his Lordship, a mixture that can only be regarded as genuine and spurious. The possession of these letters enabled Pettigrew to be the first to circulate the statement that, under the name of Thompson, Lord Nelson corresponded with Lady Hamilton on business connected with the child's earliest months of existence, as if on behalf of third and fourth parties who were to be screened by their intervention, but that in reality no such persons existed as the third and fourth parties, for they represented Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton themselves. Some of the correspondence had been in circulation for several years, and could equally be applied to other persons whose trouble might have been concealed by the intervention of the Admiral, taking Lady Hamilton into his confidence. That it was so is easily discernible in the earlier and previously published letters; it was the additions he acquired which enabled Dr. Pettigrew to build up his defamation of Lord Nelson's noble character.

In the lifetime of Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton

the child was considered merely adopted. The evidence extracted by Sir Harris Nicolas when the matter was under consideration in 1845, while editing the *Letters and Dispatches of Lord Nelson*, is but fragile, resting mainly upon the memory of the daughter of Mrs. Gibson, the person in whose charge Lady Hamilton placed the infant one night early in February 1801. The daughter was but six years of age, and twenty-eight years elapsed before she confided to a relative of Miss Nelson Thompson (then the wife of the Rev. Philip Ward) the story she remembered having heard from her mother Mrs. Gibson.

The daughter was married, by name Mrs. Johnstone, occupying a respectable position in life, as had her mother Mrs. Gibson, and a nurse was kept for the child. The statement she made was : " Lady Hamilton brought the child to her mother's house in a hackney coach one night, and placed her in Mrs. Gibson's charge, telling her she should be handsomely rewarded. She was unattended and did not give any information as to the parents. The child remained with Mrs. Gibson till she was five or six years old. Lady Hamilton constantly visited her, and Lord Nelson was frequently her companion, and often came alone and played for hours with the infant on the floor, calling her his own child."

Mrs. Johnstone was inaccurate. Horatia would be about three and a half years old when Lady Hamilton, at Lord Nelson's request, took her to reside with her. The misinterpretation of the closing lines will be remembered as the story unfolds. There was one

of whom he wrote, "He is my child, for I found him in distress," and whom he loved with a love seldom surpassed.

The additional letters of which Pettigrew became possessed were evidently founded on and dated to agree with notes sent by Lady Hamilton to Mrs. Gibson, which Mrs. Ward lent him to insert in his work. Of the extra "Thompson" letters used by Pettigrew Sir Harris Nicolas knew nothing, though he had strenuously advertised for loans.

Upon the appearance of Pettigrew's book he was at once roundly denounced, so it is no new theory that his interpretation was disapproved; but to-day the proofs of the harmfulness of his compilation are stronger. Some of the true heroes who had personally known Lord Nelson and respected his private character resented the conclusions which Pettigrew advocated. He was accused of having forged the notes himself. He certainly was aware that he could not creditably disclose how they came into his possession.

Has he done so in the plausible Preface to his biography? Not the faintest clue has he given as to the authenticity of documents of blasting import; yet he largely thanks such as had assisted him, either private persons by loans, or those in public offices by civilities. Though it was absolutely necessary that the incriminating notes should be traced back to Nelson's own hand, yet Pettigrew was singularly silent on this point. Thus we know not whence the notes came, and no taunt could ever extract a statement. Surely a sandy foundation for the destruction of a

noble reputation! At present we can go no further back than Pettigrew himself, and relying on his guiding light succeeding writers have followed in his wake.

The man of fraud is no novelty, and apt at his trade with a market in sight. Pettigrew seems to have been the first purchaser, and by him the letters appear to have been sold to one who was known to be an incautious though extensive buyer of MSS. We write of Mr. Joseph Mayer, F.S.A., silversmith and antiquarian of Liverpool and Bebington, who often found himself possessed of spurious MSS.

Mr. Mayer spent as much as £45,000 in purchasing MSS., and it is well known locally that sometimes he used little judgment when he bought. Does not the library he gave to Bebington still possess the *Simonides* forgery? Certainly for years the Nelson MSS. lay upon his shelves perfectly unheeded and uncared for. It is thought he bought them from Pettigrew, but no one ever knew what he gave for them, or whence he got them, for he was most careless over his accounts—in fact, never kept any. He was just the man to take a man's word that he had a good thing to sell, and be satisfied. His death, and the necessity of winding up his estate, brought the letters forward to auction, some of which are additional spurious slip letters supposed to be from Mr. Thompson to Mrs. Thompson, *alias* Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton.

The improbability of Pettigrew's version must be apparent, for the need of such schemes was both unnecessary and unlikely. Lord Nelson and Lady

Hamilton could by no possibility have quite concealed the fact of a surreptitious birth in her Ladyship's new half-furnished house. In the case of a married lady, domiciled with her husband, as was Lady Hamilton, if such delinquency had actually occurred, she was perfectly well situated for the concealment of misconduct; and, as all must readily admit, such an occurrence as the birth of a child would have been eminently satisfactory to Sir William her husband, so why conceal? Such letters were perfectly unnecessary in face of the safe course in which lay no betrayal. Exposure would have come surely, had those letters really been transmitted at the dates given; but when they were revealed all the chief actors were dead, and could not justify themselves, and even to-day the letters are unauthenticated.

It may be noted that they extend over a period of three months only—February, March, and April, 1801. Why did they cease then? Nelson was in the *Baltic* until July 1801. Thus for three months no "Thompson" letters appear, which in itself is extraordinary, as his Lordship was still absent. For the same months of February, March, and April questionable letters to Lady Hamilton personally exist, replete with fulsome praise, quite contrary to the Admiral's brusquely expressed admiration of her extraordinary capacity and kind heart.

The curious thing is that the later memoirs of Nelson are, as far as the connection of his Lordship and Lady Hamilton is concerned, the outcome of Pettigrew's composition; highly praised by the

modern press critic, who has too readily accepted statements and assisted to wrong those who have deserved far otherwise from their countrymen. No proofs have been produced by modern Nelson biographers to show that their case is good ; they seem to be actuated by an earnest desire to label Lady Hamilton as one among the worst of her sex, so that her name can scarce be openly uttered—most undeserved if the truth were but known ; and to further this end—the cause of Truth—this effort has been shaped after years of close study of original correspondence, accumulated and preserved by those who have mastered the details of the case and desire to aid the good work of re-writing the story of this portion of Nelson's career. It is a matter of extreme wonder that Nelson's memory is so respected by his people when so much that is foul has adhered to his character and reputation.

For instance, we are fully cognisant of the strong affection that existed between Sir William Hamilton and Lord Nelson, yet Pettigrew attributed to Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton certain extracts, which he endeavoured to use for the purpose of (under the cloak of mystery) making them the parents of Horatia Nelson Thompson, born January 31st, 1801, or thereabouts. It will, however, be shown that those extracts precisely suit one in whom Nelson took deep interest. On February 4th, in a genuine letter to Lady Hamilton, his Lordship wrote that his head ached with stooping, as he had been making memorandums for his will, which he had signed, and so they would hold good if he were to die that moment ; and, if he were not

able to send the memorandum that day as far as related to herself, he would send it next day; that he had been obliged to be more particular than he wished, as a wife could, otherwise, have nothing which might not be taken from her by will or by her husband's heirs. He desired to know if he should leave her the debt of £2,000 owing to him by her husband, and he told her to keep the letter until she received the memorandum of his will.

As a matter of course the will of Lord Nelson in case of his death would be made public; therefore is it the least probable that the following will, inserted by Pettigrew under date February 5th, would emanate from the Admiral?

How utterly at variance with the fact of a surreptitious birth would such a will have been, in which no attempt is made at concealment, and the foulest aspersions are suggested against the wife of a man of high social position, his own bosom friend! Let the matter be well considered and decided. Did Lord Nelson write that degrading memorandum, and did his relations with Sir William Hamilton and the strong attachment existing between the two leave it possible that Nelson could publicly acknowledge his own disgrace, and at the same time destroy the reputation of his friend's wife, whom Sir William, when dying, assured that she never had caused him any uneasiness?

The low style of composition is none of Nelson's, but rather that of the writer of the spurious documents that were intermingled with genuine ones and sold to

Pettigrew. As can be seen, the commencement is shaped like the last legacy to Lord Nelson's country in order to make it seem related to or connected with it. But the memorandum is full of palpable flaws. It was said to have been sent on February 5th, 1801, and will well bear consideration because of its improbability; its coining, founded on the real codicil, being an easy matter.

Memorandum introduced by Pettigrew in his Life of Lord Nelson, making Supposititious Bequests to Lady Hamilton and Horatia Nelson Thompson.

“And as Emma Hamilton, the wife of the Right Honourable Sir William Hamilton, K.B., has been the great cause of my performing those services which have gained me honours and rewards, I give unto her in case of the failure of male heirs, as directed by my will, the entire rental of the Bronté Estate for her particular use and benefit; and in case of her death before she may come into the Estate of Bronté, she is to have the full power of naming any child she may have, in or out of wedlock, or any child, male or female, which she, the said Emma Hamilton, wife of the Right Honourable Sir William Hamilton, may choose to adopt and call her child by her last will and testament or by deed declaring her intent; and the sword given by his Sicilian Majesty is to be delivered on her coming to the estate, or to the person she may name as directed by my said will; and I likewise give to the said Emma Hamilton, wife of the Right

Honourable Sir William Hamilton, K.B., etc., a picture of his Sicilian Majesty set in diamonds with the



ALEXANDER DAVISON.

After Abbott.

Queen's cypher on the opposite side, whom God preserve, with all the diamonds which surround it, as it is now lodged in a mahogany box in the care of

Alexander Davison, Esq., St. James's Square, London. I give all my other boxes lodged in the aforesaid box at Alexander Davison's, Esq., in which diamonds are placed—namely, one with the portrait of the Emperor Paul of Russia, one of the King of Sardinia, and the one said to have been sent me by the mother of the Grand Signior—likewise to the said Emma Hamilton, wife of Sir William Hamilton, to be sold if she pleases, and the income to be for her use during her natural life, and at her decease it is to be given to a child called —— in whom I take a very particular interest ; and as Emma Hamilton is the only person who knows the parents of this female child, I rely with the greatest confidence on her unspotted honour and integrity that she will consider the child as mine and be a guardian to it, shielding it from want and disgrace and bringing it up as the child of her dear friend Nelson and Bronté ; and to the female child of which Lady Hamilton shall only be declarer that it is the one I mean I give and bequeath all the money I shall be worth above the sum of twenty thousand pounds, the interest of it to be received by Lady Hamilton for the maintenance and education of this female child ; the principal to be paid her at the death of Lady Hamilton if she has attained the age of twenty-one years, or that she may marry ; the guardians of my adopted child to be named by Lady Hamilton in her will."

In examining the flaws of this memorandum we may introduce a letter written by Lord Nelson to Lady

Hamilton, in which it is plainly apparent that only on September 8th, 1803, did he ask Lady Hamilton to take the charge of little Horatia in the event of his demise. On the 6th of the same month he forwarded to his solicitor Mr. Haslewood a draft of a codicil to his will for the benefit of the child of his adoption, to be drawn up properly, which done, he, two days later, wrote as follows to inform Lady Hamilton :—

" Victory, OFF TOULON, September 8, 1803.

" I have, my dearest Emma, done what I thank God I have had the power of doing—left £4,000 to my dear Horatia, and desire that she may be acknowledged as my adopted daughter ; and I have made you her sole guardian, the interest of the money to be paid you until she is eighteen years of age. I trust, my dearest friend, that you will (if it should please God to take me out of this world) execute this great charge for me and the little innocent ; for it would add comfort to my last moments to think that she would be educated in the paths of religion and virtue, and receive as far as she is capable some of those brilliant accomplishments which much adorn you. You must not allow your good heart to think that, although I have left you this important charge, I fancy myself nearer being knocked off by the French Admiral. I believe it to be quite the contrary, that God Almighty will again and again bless our just cause with victory, and that I shall live to receive your kind and affectionate congratulations on a brilliant victory. But

be that as it may, I shall support, with God's help, my unblemished character to the last, and be

"Yours,

"NELSON AND BRONTE."

What a contrast, and how contradictory in style, is this latter, which is unmistakably Nelsonian, containing the first resolve to adopt the child which can be regarded as genuine. The allusion to his unblemished character is akin to the lines he wrote to Mr. Alexander Davison, January 28th, 1801: "Either as a public or a private [man] I wish nothing undone which I have done." This was written to him who knew him best and was entirely in his confidence. When placed beside the letter of September 8th, 1803, who would admit that the scurrilous memorandum of February 5th, 1801, was written by his Lordship?

Another point which shows to disadvantage in the memorandum is the bequest to Lady Hamilton of the estate of Bronte, which was then in a bankrupt condition and causing Lord Nelson much anxiety. He was most anxious that the King of Naples would take it off his hands; he could not get in the rents, and only in 1805 did the estate commence to yield any return under the good management of Lord Nelson's agent Mr. Gibbs. The previous agent, Mr. Graefer, had died, and his outlay on the estate had been unnecessary and ruinous.

In a letter to Lord Keith dated Palermo, March 20th, 1800, is the following agreement for five hundred pipes of Bronte wine between Lord Nelson and Messrs.

Woodhouse, the wine to be delivered to his Majesty's ships lying in the Mediterranean :—

“An agreement made and entered into by the Right Hon^{ble} Rear Admiral Horatio Lord Nelson, K.B., Duke of Bronte, Sicily, etc., etc., with John and William Woodhouse, Merch^{ts} of Marsala at Palermo, the Nineteenth day of March, 1800, to furnish His Majesty's Ships off Malta with five hundred pipes of the best Marsala Wine, to be delivered there free of freight and all other Charges without loss of time at one shilling and five pence sterling per Gallon, Wine Measure, and to be paid for in Bills upon the Commissioners for Victualing His Majesty's Navy at the usual date, by the respective Pursers of His Majesty's Ships to which the Wine is delivered ; and should any of the Casks be wanted with the Wine, an additional Charge is to be added of one pound sterling each pipe.”

The above was written by Mr. John Woodhouse on behalf of himself and his brother. Before signing Nelson added :—

“The Wine to be delivered as expeditiously as possible, and all to be deliver'd within the space of five weeks from this date. A Convoy will be wanted for the Vessel from Marsala, but all risks are to be run by Mr. Woodhouse,

“BRONTE NELSON.”

When Lord Nelson received his first consignment of Marsala wines ordered for the fleet from his estate,

he was asked to give the wine a name, so that it might be known to English people. The Admiral replied, "Call it Bronte." His Lordship was reminded that Bronte meant *Thunder*. "Oh," retorted Lord Nelson, "it will do very well ; John Bull will not know what it means, and will think all the better of it on that account."

The condition of Bronte even in 1803 may be inferred from a letter of Lord Nelson's, September 26th : "I have wrote Mr. Gibbs again a long history about Bronte ; and I hope, if General Acton will do nothing for me, that he [Mr. Gibbs] will settle something, but I know whatever is settled I shall be the loser." A most improbable bequest under such conditions. Would such an encumbrance be a likely bequest from Nelson to a woman with no personal means to meet the difficulties under which the estate laboured, and that without any visible prospect of improvement ?

Would Lord Nelson defame the honoured ex-Ambassador by the circulation of that which could only be audacious insult, or would he be in the least likely to send Lady Hamilton a memorandum containing reference to a child of hers born in or out of wedlock ? It is incomprehensible that such an outrageous deed should ever have obtained credence.

Here is another attempt at mystery, and an endeavour to make a charitable act of Lord Nelson tell against him, Sir Harris Nicolas copied from those printed letters. "Oct. 19, 1801.—I have sent poor Thomson's letter and the distressed Mrs. . . . to the Earl"—"the meaning of which paragraph is very

obscure," says Sir Harris Nicolas. Then why not throw light upon it? The lady was Mrs. Mosse, widow of Captain Mosse, who fell in action on April 2nd. She was left with six children unprovided for. Lord St. Vincent replied next day, October 20th: "Captain Thompson had justice done him the moment I was apprized of his merits; a notification was sent to him some time ago." No myth here to cover crime, but simply the needs of an injured fellow-creature and a widow with orphans, laid before Lord St. Vincent by Nelson. Captain Thompson had his leg shot off at the Battle of Copenhagen.

The Committee of Lloyd's voted £60 per annum long annuities to Mrs. Mosse and her children, and £500 to Captain T. B. Thompson.

The name of Captain Robert Mosse must have been quite familiar to Sir Harris Nicolas, and his representing the widow's name with dots to provoke mystery is far from creditable to him. The names were coupled in Nelson's correspondence about the Battle of Copenhagen until they were both pensioned.

A generation almost had passed away between the insertion by Pettigrew of the new readings in his *Life of Lord Nelson* and their discovery on the shelves of Mr. Mayer's library at Bebington. The letters having lain so long in oblivion, the fact of their genuineness having been called in question was unknown or forgotten, and their reappearance was welcomed by eager purchasers. Their market value had increased through more recent Nelsonian biographers having followed Pettigrew's theories. Time had strengthened belief

in his version, because of the impossibility of successfully disproving the story he told.

The question may be asked why he did not include the following remarkable letter, which was among his purchases. It must strike every reader that it would be most important if the series of letters had been wholly genuine. This special one is addressed in the usual manner: "To Mrs. Thomson, care of Lady Hamilton." In face of so many grateful expressions contained in the slip notes how utterly contradictory will it be found.

"OFF PORTLAND, 10 O'CLOCK,
" *February 20, 1801.*

"I hope Lady Hamilton, our dear and amiable friend, sends you my letters immediately as¹ she has received them, but I know her worth, and that she would scorn a mean or dirty action; but if you think there is any reason to suspect her of opening your letters I will, if you desire it, direct them to another house. Perhaps you know some female friend they might be directed under cover to. I hope to get him to London in a very few days, and you and he can settle everything. Don't tell Lady H. I suspect her of doing either you or your friend an injury. I declare to God I believe her conduct to be purity itself."

Could the discharge of Lady Hamilton from her post as confidential agent ever have been contemplated, when she had so faithfully performed whatever she

¹ The inaccurate grammar is not Lord Nelson's.

thought necessary for the welfare of the child entrusted to her supervision? Would another have kept the secret as well?

If, as has been insinuated, the letters were intended for Lady Hamilton herself, would Lord Nelson have run the risk of defaming the wife of his dear friend by actually numbering each letter to ensure their not being intercepted without knowledge? In this letter we find an extract which simulates truth, *i.e.* the taking ashore of Mrs. Thomson's friend when Lord Nelson obtained his own leave of absence.

Further proof that Nelsonian forgeries exist is to be found in letters bearing the same dates, with portions of matter precisely the same in both. One will continue to the end in the blunt, concise style of Lord Nelson; the other will wander away into vapid love utterances, which palpably lack sincerity, as would be but the natural result of a concocted composition.

The false correspondence has been thrown on the market, and carried with it, on its first appearance, a semblance of truth. As examples of duplicate dates two letters may be quoted. The first will be found to contain the genuine Nelsonian ring.

"St. George, OFF ROSTOCK, May 24, 1801.

"MY DEAREST FRIEND,—Yesterday I joined Admiral Totty, where I found little Parker with your dear, kind, friendly letters. How can I sufficiently thank you for all your goodness and kindness to me, a forlorn outcast, except in your generous soul. My health I have represented to the Admiralty in such

Nelson's Friendships

terms that I have no doubt but an Admiral has sailed to take my place. The *Harpy* has carried a longer letter than any of the former. This vessel states that I do not know that I shall go to sea again, as my health requires the shore and gentle exercise, and so it does ; and really if the Admiralty had allowed me to go home, and in the event of hostilities being renewed in the Baltic, I might perhaps in that case have been able to command the fleet, but the Baltic folks will never fight me if it is to be avoided.

"In my humble opinion we shall have Peace with the Northern Powers if we are *just* in our desires.

"Will you have the goodness to carry the enclosed, after you have sealed it, to Mrs. Maurice Nelson?¹ and your own dear generous heart will say every kind thing for me. She shall be fixed where she pleases, and with every comfort in this world, and ever be considered as my honoured sister-in-law. I feel my dear brother's confidence, and she shall feel he has not mistaken me. Tell Mrs. William Nelson how much I esteem her for all her kindness, and that I shall never forget her complying with my request and staying with you, although I hope it has been truly pleasant to herself.

"Ever yours truly,

"NELSON AND BRONTE."

It would require no great power of discernment to decide whether the duplicate-dated letter is spurious

¹ Mr. Maurice Nelson was but recently deceased. Lord Nelson allowed his brother's widow an annuity of £100, and after his death she was assisted by Lady Hamilton.

or genuine. It has no signature, and therefore classifies itself with the unsigned correspondence, of no authority whatever, upon which Pettigrew founded his unsavoury history.

"*St. George*, OFF ROSTOCK, *May 24*, 1801.

"MY DEAREST BELOVED FRIEND,—Yesterday I joined Admiral Totty, and found little Parker with *all, all* my treasures, your dear, kind, friendly letters, your picture as Santa Emma, for a Santa you are if ever there was one in this World. For what makes a Saint? the being so much better than the rest of the human race; therefore as truly as I believe in God do I believe you are a Saint, and in this age of Wickedness you sett an example of real Virtue and goodness which, if we are not too far sunk in Luxury and Infamy, ought to rouse up almost forgot virtue. And may God's curse alight on those who mean to draw you, my dearest friend, from a quiet house into the company of Men and Women of bad character; and I am one of those who believe that in England the higher the class the worse the company. I speak generally; I will not think as bad of any class but that there be some good individual in it. How can I sufficiently thank you for all your goodness and kindness to me, a forlorn outcast, except in your generous soul."

The final sentence is strong evidence that it was founded on the former letter, and that the greater part of the substance is fictitious. On comparison it

will be seen that they both commence with the same wording, and the continuing sentence in the first letter is the final in the second. Other specimens of similar consistencies exist.

To those versed in Nelson's quaint style of expressing himself it will be apparent that the next letter quoted bears no comparison to it. The document was endorsed in another handwriting, not in that of Lord Nelson, "The enclosed found in a letter to Lady Hamilton dated *Victory*, August 18, 1804," which endorsement is no proof that the undated enclosure was genuine, nor does it show how many years had transpired before it was placed in the letter of date August 18th, 1804. It can, however, be confuted.

"My beloved, how I feel for your situation and that of our dear Horatia, our dear child! Unexampled love, never I trust to be diminished, never—no, even death with all his terrors would be jubilant compared even to the thought. I wish I had had the small-pox for her, but I know the fever is the natural consequence. I dreamt last night I heard her call Papa and point to her arm just as you described. Give Mrs. Gibson a guinea for me, and I will repay you. Dear wife, good adorable friend, how I love you, and what would I not give to be with you at this moment, for I am all yours."

The letter in which this is said to have been *enclosed* was a long one brimful of kind efforts to assist young men in the naval profession, and other deeds of goodness.

As to little Horatia having had the small-pox, a

receipt for money sent by Lady Hamilton to Mrs. Gibson for her charge of the child, dated November 7th, 1804, scarcely shows that Horatia had had so serious an illness, one from which it would take months in those days before the unsightly scars would wear away and complete strength be regained.

"Mrs. Gibson's duty to Lady Hamilton, and am happy to inform you that Miss Thompson is very well and desires her love and a kiss to her Ladyship and to her god-papa. I have sent the receipt, and there now remains due up to Nov. 5 24 pounds two shillings.

"Your most humble," etc.

"Receipt.

"Nov. 5 1804, Received of Lady Hamilton the sum of thirty pounds for lodging and attendance on Miss Thompson.

"Received the contents.

Signed Mary Gibson.¹

"£30 0 0."

A nurse would certainly comment on improvement in the health of one whom she was well paid to watch. But of more importance is the fact that in August 1806 an epidemic of small-pox caused Lady Hamilton great fright for herself and Horatia, and she was strongly urged by Mrs. Pierson of Brancaster to go to her with Horatia, she writing: "We think as you kept the dear Horatia from them she is perfectly safe, therefore do not fret about it." The anxiety of Lady Hamilton

¹ The Morrison MSS.

shows that the child could not have had the small-pox at the time mentioned in the letter which is queried as emanating from Lord Nelson.

An "uncle and aunt" are frequently mentioned in the mysterious "Thompson" correspondence, but were omitted by Pettigrew in the working out of the slander, for they could by no means be fitted into it, nor be made to bear such a relationship to Lord Nelson or to Lady Hamilton. He therefore ignored the letters which alluded to them. But succeeding writers have explained to us that the "uncle" was Sir William Hamilton, the "aunt" Lady Nelson; and this though they can by no possibility be connected.

Able but misguided pens have thus greatly increased the difficulties of those earnest students of the private life of Lord Nelson whose studies have tended to show that the "discoveries" of Pettigrew were not quite honestly revealed.

So much has been written to the disadvantage of Lord Nelson that readers will readily pardon the omission of its repetition in these pages, for the aim of the present writer is to place before those interested the other side of the question, and to show that the whole fabric of falsification can be demolished. In any case this effort is offered for the consideration of those who desire to compare the points at issue, and who wish to judge for themselves, when once they are in possession of that which has been withheld or which does not fit in with the theory that Nelson and Thompson were one and the same person. There is much underlying evidence that they were two distinct persons, though

on the most intimate terms. The "uncle" of *Mrs. Thompson* is several times mentioned in the papers from which Pettigrew shaped his history; but not in such a way as proves that he and Sir William Hamilton were one and the same person. For instance, take one paper (undated), supposed to be written by Nelson to Mrs. Thompson, care of Lady Hamilton. It will be noticed that in each case nothing definite is written about, all is unsounded mystery.

"Your most dear friend desires me to say that he sincerely feels for you, and that if your uncle is so hard hearted as to oblige you to quit his house, that he will instantly quit all the world and its greatness to live with you a quiet life. Lady Hamilton will always give you good advice, and you will always find an affectionate friend in your, etc. Love to my godchild." This, it is supposed, was written in March 1801. Sir William, writing about the same time to Lord Nelson (March 12th, 1801), tells him that "Emma is growing better in health every day," and he refers his Lordship to her letter for the small talk of the day. There is certainly no bad feeling evinced by the knight towards his wife, rather is it that of thorough reliance.

Nor can Sir William pose as the "uncle" in the following, attached as a postscript to a letter to Lady Hamilton (March 11th): "Tell Mrs. Thomson her friend is miserable at parting with her and his dear child. He desires me to beg you to be kind to her, and to bless his child for him and to comfort his afflicted wife that is to be, and to make her cheer up

against her uncle and his cruelty, for neither he nor I can call it by any other name."

Or to Mrs. Thompson: "He begs me again to be his bondsman, and that he will marry you the moment your uncle dies, or it comes a peace, and he desires a blessing to his child, and you will forgive my desiring you to kiss it for me."

If peace arrived before Sir William ended his mortal days, would it be possible for Nelson, encumbered with a wife, and Lady Hamilton with a husband, to have so lightly designed to enter matrimony themselves?

Again, "He [Thompson] is all astonishment at the conduct of her Uncle. How very extraordinary! As for his Aunt, he don't care a fig for her." Vapid nonsense!

What had the uncle done? Who was he? The fact that a fraud has been perpetrated is made apparent by this mass of mystery. As to Sir William, he must have been present when letters arrived from Lord Nelson, and would surely ask an explanation of the enclosures, and he would have been keen enough to detect falsity. The child Horatia he knew all about. She was sometimes when very young brought to his house in Piccadilly, and openly shown to visitors as a child in whom Lord Nelson took an interest.

The story of Pettigrew cannot find acceptance when seriously considered. Think of Lady Hamilton dancing a *pas-seul* with the utmost grace, and performing her celebrated attitudes, or *tableaux vivants*, which evoked pathetic tears by their charm at Fonthill, just about four weeks before the date of the child's birth,

as inferred by the Thompson letters. Many of the eighty refined guests of the highest mental and social calibre (for the eccentric and gifted host, Mr. William Beckford, prided himself upon his exclusiveness) weeping at her exquisite performances !

No relative of Lord Nelson considered her the mother of Horatia Nelson Thompson ; not Lady Nelson, nor his sisters, nor their husbands, nor his reverend brother, nor Sir William Hamilton, nor Mr. Charles Greville, the heir-presumptive, who was to inherit Sir William's property failing an heir-apparent—*he* never remarked upon the chances of an heir depriving him of his long desired accession.

So much that is incredible has been accepted that even an apologetic preface is unnecessary in offering a new reading of the letters—an offering which is the result of a close study of the subject, with faith in the honour of Lord Nelson as its foundation.

The question of Lord Nelson's relationship to Horatia Nelson Thompson is presented here for consideration, supported by an extract from a letter still in possession of his relatives. It was written after the death of Lady Hamilton to his Lordship's brother-in-law Mr. Matcham (with whom he had been on most intimate terms) by Mr. William Haslewood, solicitor of the late Admiral. In this letter it is clearly shown that neither of these two gentlemen considered the young lady as other than adopted by the late Lord Nelson, and that she was the offspring of whom they knew not. It is perhaps the most important document that has appeared wherewith to face the

argument in question. The whole letter will be inserted at its proper date ; at present the extract only will suffice.

After the death and funeral of Lady Hamilton at



MR. GEORGE MATCHAM.

From miniature lent by Mrs. Matcham.

Calais, in January 1815, Miss Nelson was at once brought over to England by Mr. Henry Cadogan, agent at Lloyd's, who feared her arrest for Lady Hamilton's debts. As he passed through London he was refunded the funeral expenses by Alderman

Joshua Jonathan Smith,¹ and then proceeded to Ashfold Lodge to Mr. Matcham, to whom he delivered up Miss Nelson, and after making a very brief stay he returned to France.

Mr. Matcham had an afterthought he was wishful to communicate to Mr. Cadogan, and sent to Mr. Haslewood's house, thinking his missive might be in time for Mr. Cadogan to receive it; but he had passed on, and in so informing Mr. Matcham, Mr. Haslewood wrote a letter, dated February 7th, 1815, from which the extract is quoted :—

"I collected from Mr. Smith's conversation that he was reluctant to communicate what he knew, or rather what he suspected (for I believe he knows nothing), of Miss Nelson's history, from an apprehension of exposing her to neglect, if not ridicule or contempt. He formed, as I told him, a most erroneous judgement of those who prided themselves on the title of Lord Nelson's friends, and above all, a most erroneous judgement of you, if he thought that any of us could neglect, much more could despise, one who, whatever might be her extraction, was most dear to our illustrious friend, if she were not in herself unworthy. I will press this upon him more closely, and have little doubt but that I shall extract all he knows and imagines, the conclusions he has formed as to Miss Nelson's birth, and the grounds of them."

This is genuine and incontestable authority as to the opinions held both by Lord Nelson's brother-in-law and by his confidential man of business. Although

¹ The Alderman is the "Mr. Smith" mentioned in the extract.

Lord Nelson had consulted Mr. Haslewood over a codicil to his will providing in the future for the little girl, yet the solicitor never entertained the idea that she was Lord Nelson's own daughter. This is most important rebutting evidence, for when the letter was sent to Mr. Matcham, several years had passed since the death of Lord Nelson, yet both the writer and the recipient were evidently still in ignorance of the child's parentage.

Furthermore, about 1845 Mr. Haslewood was consulted by Sir Harris Nicolas as to the truth of the story of Lady Hamilton being the mother, and the paragraph he inserted in his article, "Miss Horatia Nelson Thompson," still further strengthens our argument. He says: "It has generally been supposed that she was the daughter of Lord Nelson by Lady Hamilton; and although many facts are calculated to raise such a presumption, the Editor is authorised by Mr. Haslewood, long the confidential friend and professional adviser of Lord Nelson, to declare in the most positive manner that *Lady Hamilton was not the mother*. The name of the mother is known to Mr. Haslewood, but he is prevented by a sense of honour from disclosing it."

About the same time, following Sir Harris Nicolas, Mrs. Ward wrote to ask Mr. Haslewood who her mother was, for she also did not think it was Lady Hamilton. The answer the old gentleman sent, written on September 26th, 1846, and fully agreeing with what he had so often enforced, was that he dare not write so fully as he could wish lest the secret he was bound

to keep should become too transparent ; that her mother often saw her at Lady Hamilton's, but she married and went abroad, and, he believed, never returned. It may be inferred from certain letters that ultimate marriage between the parties was intended, and that objections by the lady's relatives had acted as a deterrent.

Alderman Smith would most likely obtain his information from the letters left with him by Lady Hamilton, referred to by Mr. Haslewood in his letter to Mr. Matcham ; and as Mr. Haslewood would request that any correspondence relative to Miss Nelson should be given up to the family, as a matter of course the solicitor would gather the truth from their inspection, and would feel in honour bound to conceal that which Lord Nelson had not wished to reveal.

There are then sufficient grounds to reinvestigate the "Thompson" letters with the object of discovering whether there were any person in company with Lord Nelson at sea during the months of February, March, and April, 1801, on whose behalf his Lordship would be likely to act as a go-between in order to reach some one in the hour of approaching emergency ashore ; some one whom from attachment he would shield ; whose delinquency would be overlooked by the kindly nature of Nelson, if only on account of the youth whom he loved.

The very proposition in its freshness is startling, but it is worthy of consideration as being much more reasonable than the incrimination of Lord Nelson himself.

To those well versed in Lord Nelson's career and conversant with the singular and inexplicable attachment which existed on his part for Lieutenant (afterwards Captain) Edward Thornborough Parker—"My dear son," as Lord Nelson always called him—the proposition will be easier understood.

In every instance where the name of "Mr. Thompson" appears, that of Captain Parker could be equally well substituted.

The young man was admitted to unusual freedom by the Admiral. A youthful indiscretion of one to whom he showed so much partiality would not have undue weight with Lord Nelson, who would help him in the difficulty, and comfort him by acting as god-parent. Was then Captain Edward Thornborough Parker the mysterious "Mr. Thompson," and the father of Horatia Nelson Thompson, the adopted daughter of Lord Nelson?

The argument will be better understood as the story of Captain Parker is disclosed.

Lord Nelson's patronage dates back to the time when Sir John Orde was resenting the advancement of Lord Nelson above himself; young Parker's conduct at that time first won for him Nelson's regard.

Some trouble had befallen him prior to Lord Nelson's notice, a trouble of which Lord St. Vincent was aware, for it is referred to in the letter which informed the Earl of the young man's death in September 1801: "When he was abandoned by the world your heart had begun to yearn towards him—

how well he has deserved my love and affection his actions have shown."

Parker was serving on the *Foudroyant* in September 1799 when that vessel, the finest two-decker afloat, as Nelson called it, was sent to Sardinia to convey the Sardinian King to Leghorn. Lieutenant Parker went with the vessel, and Nelson remained at Palermo temporarily in the *Samuel and Jane* transport.

It was in order to give Parker an opportunity of distinguishing himself, and to bring his name under the notice of those who could advance him in his profession, that Nelson had Parker commissioned to fetch the King of Sardinia.

From Leghorn Parker wrote the following to Lord Nelson, dated September 26th, 1799 :—

"LEGHORN, September 26, 1799

"MY LORD,—If I neglected an opportunity of returning you my most cordial thanks for the very friendly interest you have displayed in the promoting of my future welfare I should deem myself utterly void of all feeling.

"The very flattering Situations I have been placed in by your goodness while in the *Foudroyant* deserve the earliest Tribute of Gratitude, and the Strong Recommendations you gave me to the King of Sardinia never can be erased from a Thankful Heart.

"Accept then, my Lord, all that heartfelt thanks you can possibly conceive mankind to possess, and attribute what [is] now advanced to the real Sentiments of a susceptible mind replete with esteem and gratitude.

"I have the honour to remain, with sincere thanks,
your Lordship's most obedient and obliged servant,

"EDWARD T. PARKER.¹

"R^R ADMIRAL NELSON.

"By the approbation of his Majesty, Mr. Windham detains me until the 28th, when I set out for Vienna charged with Dispatches for the Grand Duke, and Lord Minto."

The King of Sardinia sent a message to England by Lieutenant Parker, for Nelson wrote to Sir Thomas Troubridge on October 1st, 1799, "Mr. Parker is just gone home by desire of the King of Sardinia."²

When passing by the house of Lady Nelson at Roundwood, near Ipswich, Lieutenant Parker paid her a hurried visit to tell her that her husband was well on September 8th; and her Ladyship wrote, October 21st, 1799: "The young man's extreme gratitude and modesty will never be obliterated from your good father's and my memory. He stayed a very few minutes, as the express from Vienna was at the door."

That Lieutenant Parker was under obligations to his chief is amply evident by the outpouring of gratitude in the letter next quoted, wherein reference is made to the trouble out of which Lord Nelson had extricated him. Sympathy forged the first firm link in the chain of affection which bound together these two kindred souls.

¹ MS., British Museum.

² Sir Harris Nicolas mistakes this Parker for Lieutenant William Parker. That it was E. T. Parker the signature in correspondence testifies.

"LONDON, *Nov.* 3rd, —99.¹

"MY LORD,—With the utmost respect I beg leave to address your Lordship to acknowledge that to your goodness as a Patron and as a Friend, I do, and ever shall hold myself indebted for everything that can make life valuable to a Seaman in a Service that has been render'd so friendly to me by your most friendly attachment.

"To you, my Lord, I am indebted for the opportunity I had of clearing my Professional Character from the Calumny I laboured under. An opportunity I must, and ever shall look back to, with the utmost satisfaction, not only in its convincing the [?] my Behaviour must have merited your approbation, but that your strong & flattering Recommendations in consequence, have procured me Promotion to a Rank which will stimulate my every Effort to justify your Lordship's Partiality towards me, by paying an unceasing Assiduity to the Duties of the Service, to which my Life is ardently devoted, a Life every period of which must more forcibly impress my mind with the obligations I am under to your Lordship's Friendship & Generosity. As I have now advanced the full Sentiments of a Heart replete with a Knowledge of the obligations I owe to you, I have only to add that, whenever I am fortunate enough to be employed, nothing will give me greater Satisfaction, than being allowed the Honor of again serving under your Command, an offer which I trust will prove accept-

¹ Nelson MSS., British Museum.

able, from one who assures your Lordship that he Remains your Lordship's much obliged and devoted humble Servant,

"EDW" T. PARKER."

The obligation to which the writer alludes is that in consequence of Lord Nelson's recommendations, and the efficient manner in which Parker executed the missions he was sent upon, a captaincy was conferred upon him.

In England therefore we find Captain Parker at the end of the year 1799, and, as is apparent, not attached to any ship, nor is the prospect of engagement perceptibly close at hand, for, he writes, "when-ever I am fortunate enough to be employed, nothing will give me greater satisfaction than being allowed the Honor of again serving under your Command."

Nelson's supersession by Lord Keith in the command of the Mediterranean fleet caused him to return home, as we know, in company with others bound for England, including Sir William and Lady Hamilton, all of whom landed at Yarmouth on November 6th, 1800. Captain Parker is at once found in their company in London, and evidently was very soon on intimate terms with the family of his patron.

Owing to the disagreements with Lady Nelson, the Admiral resumed sea life ; and, in accordance with the wish of his *protégé*, that if he were so fortunate as to be again employed he hoped he might serve under Lord Nelson, Parker accompanied his Lordship

on board the *San Josef*, where on January 18th, 1801, Nelson's flag was hoisted.

At the end of January begin the mysterious letters, or rather, at first, mysterious references, in Lord Nelson's own correspondence with Lady Hamilton, to a Mr. Thomson and a Mrs. Thomson, the latter to be reached through the agency of Lady Hamilton, who, it appears, had been taken into confidence. Captain Parker had been well known to her Ladyship when serving on the *Foudroyant*.

The first time the name "Thomson" occurs is towards the end of a letter from Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton, January 21st, 1801, and there is a curious erasure of the name.

In the original letter¹ a sentence commences, "I delivered to Mr. Thompson Mrs. ——" The two latter words have been smeared out with the finger, but still show that the word *Mrs.* is written over a word that looks like *Miss*, as if a genuine name had narrowly escaped insertion.

After the erasure the line is discontinued and a fresh one commenced. The gentleman's name is omitted, merely represented by a dash. "I delivered to Mr. — Mrs. Thomson's message." Thus, under the smear the name is spelt *Thompson*, and is followed by *Thomson*.

A few extracts at this important point may be inserted, it being borne in mind that Captain Parker was in attendance upon Lord Nelson, and therefore would have the privilege of entering his cabin.

¹ Nelson MSS., British Museum.

January 26th. "Mrs. Thomson's friend is this moment come into my room ; he desires me to thank you for your goodness to his dear friend. He appears almost as miserable as myself."

January 28th. "I have this moment seen Mrs. Thomson's friend. Poor fellow ! he seems very uneasy and melancholy."

January 29th. "Pray tell your friend Mrs. T. that I have delivered her note to her friend, and he desires me to say through your goodness how sensible he is of her kindness. . . . What a hard case these poor people's is ! but between your unparalleled goodness and my attention I hope they will yet be happy and comfortable. In my opinion neither of them can be as they are."

During the next two days the anxieties were alleviated, and on February 1st Nelson wrote, apparently describing the joy of the father on hearing of the birth : "My dear Lady, I believe poor dear Mrs. Thomson's friend will go mad with joy. He cries, prays, and performs all manner of tricks, yet dare not show all or any of his feelings ; he has only me to consult with. He swears he will drink your health this day in a bumper."

The drinking of the bumpers gives the first connection between Captain Parker and Mr. Thomson. After dispatching the intimation that Mr. Thomson intended to drink a bumper to the health of her Ladyship on February 1st, we find Lord Nelson writing to her on February 2nd : "I dined yesterday with Troubridge, Darby, Hardy, my brother, and Parker,

who all drank a bumper to your health, and I set all the doctors at defiance, till my brother said I should hurt myself; and Mrs. Thomson's friend drank two, because he said you had been so kind to his dear friend, who he loved more than life."

Nelson must have exceeded two bumpers to call forth the remonstrance of his brother, while Captain Parker might take a second in Mrs. Thomson's interest. Most evidently there was a concealed link between Lord Nelson, Captain Parker, and Lady Hamilton. Why should so uninteresting a remark as the young man's having dined with him be considered worthy of note—a mere youth—or such items as "Parker boasts whenever he drinks your health, which is at least once a day"? Whence the necessity to report so trifling an incident, unless gratitude were the cause of the toast?

Lady Hamilton evidently feared that Lord Nelson in his enthusiasm might betray himself, and she advised him to be careful. To which he replied: "This moment has brought me your two kind letters. You may rely I shall not open my mouth on poor dear Mrs. Thomson's business to any creature on this earth. You and I should be very unworthy if we did any such thing, as all the secret of these two people rests solely in our bosoms."

According to Lady Hamilton's notes to Mrs. Gibson (the person with whom she placed the babe), the mother was, for some time to come, very ill in the country.

After telling of the drinking of the bumpers, Lord Nelson continued: "That friend of our dear Mrs. T. is a good soul and full of feeling. He wishes

much to see her and her little one. If possible I will get him leave for two or three days when I go to Portsmouth, and you will see his gratitude to you."

Lord Nelson had leave of absence from February 24th to 27th, and in the accounts of his bankers, Messrs. Marsh, Creed, & Co., appears an entry of cash payment of £50 to Captain E. T. Parker on February 25th, which shows Captain Parker to have been in London also; and surely it is most singular that he was found on the leave of absence that was promised to Mr. Thomson.

On the return to the vessel at Portsmouth, which was at noon on February 27th, Lord Nelson wrote to Lady Hamilton: "I have seen Mrs. Thomson's friend, who is delighted at my having seen his dear child. I am sure he will be very fond of it."

The remark is quite reasonable when made of another person, but most unlikely to have been written by Lord Nelson of himself when he had only left Lady Hamilton a few hours.

As he had taken so unusual an interest in the little child, and intended to be its godfather when it was christened, it naturally followed that he would desire to see it while in London, which it seems he did.

In a supplementary chapter to Pettigrew's *Life of Nelson*, he gives, as an unquestionable proof that little Horatia was the child of his Lordship, a letter which may be considered spurious on two or three grounds. In this letter, dated February 3rd, Nelson is represented as sending Lady Hamilton £100 to defray the expenses of the child's birth.

In a footnote Pettigrew remarks : " In Lord Nelson's account with his agents, Messrs. Marsh, Page, & Creed, I find the entry of the payment of a draft for this amount to Lady Hamilton : it is the first time her name appears in the accounts."

It would have been decidedly more honourable of Pettigrew to have supplied the date of the draft, *March 17th, 1801.*

Lord Nelson was in Lady Hamilton's company for three days at the end of February, when on leave of absence. Had such money been required then it would have been given by hand ; precaution alone would have prompted this.

But neither Lord Nelson nor Captain Parker would have delayed such payment more than a fortnight after returning to the vessel. It is most likely that the cash for £50 paid to Captain Parker through Lord Nelson's bankers on February 25th enabled the young man to settle expenses incurred.

The date of the draft for £100 paid to Lady Hamilton, was purposely omitted by Pettigrew, for he had to make it fit in with the letter of February 3rd, which may really be regarded as one of his spurious purchases. The omission is all the more reprehensible inasmuch as he follows it in the footnote with an item, also from Messrs. Marsh, Page, & Creed's account, that on January 13th, 1801, Lord Nelson drew £400 for Lady Nelson. Pettigrew gives the date of this draft, though he derived his knowledge of both payments from the same source.

On March 1st Captain Parker was appointed to

the command of a fine frigate, and he sailed in company with Lord Nelson to the Baltic, and took part in the Battle of Copenhagen. In March and the earlier part of April Lord Nelson enclosed brief notes to Mrs. Thomson, care of Lady Hamilton, on behalf of Mr. Thomson, but writing as from himself. Following the Battle of Copenhagen another singular connection with Captain Parker and Mr. Thomson is discernible in one of these notes (April 9th, 1801): "Your friend was on shore with me to-day to receive with me the ratification of the treaty of Armistice." Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart, in his narrative of the Baltic events, says that on April 9th Lord Nelson landed at Copenhagen, accompanied by himself, *Captain Parker*, and Dr. Scott.

This in itself is strong evidence of the combination of the dual personages, and such evidence is worthy of consideration, for we find that Mr. Thomson and Captain Parker were the same party who went with Admiral Nelson to Copenhagen on April 9th, 1801. From this date letters to Mrs. Thomson cease ; and this may be accounted for by Captain Parker's sailing for England on business for the fleet. His return is mentioned May 24th, where in a letter to Lady Hamilton, Lord Nelson acknowledges the receipt of her correspondence brought by Parker. On June 11th Nelson sent a letter to Lady Hamilton enclosed in one to Mr. Alexander Davison, whom he instructed in a postscript, "Pray send the enclosed. Captain Parker desires his respects." Why should Captain Parker be selected for special respects to

Mr. Davison, whom he could only very recently have known—Captain Parker so young, while there were older captains whose acquaintance with Mr. Davison was of longer standing?

The mention of the enclosure to Lady Hamilton being followed so closely by Parker's name certainly suggests that the favour of transmitting the enclosure would be an obligation to Captain Parker, and Mr. Davison would understand it as such by the singling of him out for the sending of "respects."

It is quite evident that Lady Hamilton executed some private business for Captain Parker; for after his mission to England in April and May, we find him corresponding personally with Lady Hamilton. The following is a sample, written on June 14th, 1801, which will show favours conferred and knowledge of little Horatia :—

"MY LADY,—You are so very kind in every instance to me that I should be most ungrateful was I not to acknowledge so many and repeated favours and attentions. I feel most particularly grateful at the receipt of your friendly epistle enclosed to my most valued friend for me, and I am happy beyond measure to tell you he has perfectly recovered his late indisposition, which I assure you was such as to excite no little alarm in my breast when I first saw him; but, thank God, the change of scene added to the hopes he had of constantly receiving orders to go home from his own request, buoyed him up against the indisposition he laboured under, and the fresh and certain

intelligence of another Admiral quitting England to take this command has altered him to everything we can wish. He can, thank God, now eat and drink, laugh and joke—in short, I never before saw him in such spirits. He purposes allowing me the honour of going home with him, and you can, I am sure, knowing the affectionate esteem I have for him, well conceive how peculiarly happy such attentions from him must make me. . . . I am glad to hear the beautiful Horatia is so well, and shall not easily forget your proposal, which I leave you to make to the Admiral. . . . My best respects to Sir William and Mrs. Nelson, nor do I forget Horatia, and with great esteem I remain

“Your Ladyship’s most grateful servant,

“E. T. PARKER.”

Is it not singular that a young man should write to Lady Hamilton in such terms about a babe of so tender an age: “I am glad to hear the beautiful Horatia is so well, and shall not easily forget your proposal, which I leave you to make to the Admiral”? The conjunction *and* links together some unnamed proposal and Horatia.

The conclusion of the letter equally points in the same direction: “My best respects to Sir William and Mrs. Nelson, nor do I forget Horatia.” Why mention that little child and omit Mrs. Cadogan, who would be sure to be kind to him, or Miss Charlotte Nelson, who was a resident with Lady Hamilton? Apparently the little one was uppermost in the young man’s thoughts.

When Lord Nelson returned to England Captain Parker accompanied him ; they landed at Yarmouth on July 1st, and after visiting the sufferers in the hospital, who had been wounded at Copenhagen, they departed for Sir William Hamilton's house in London.

It was deemed advisable, that, after a few days' rest, Lord Nelson should go out of town for change of air, so excursions were made into the country by the party. One place they visited was the "Bush" at Staines, with a good garden on the Thames, where Sir William could indulge in his favourite pastime of fishing ; another inn was the "Hare and Hounds," Burford Bridge, near Boxhill, a favourite resort. Keats wrote his *Endymion* there, and Mrs. Barbauld was a frequent visitor.

The party, besides the Rev. William Nelson, his wife and children, included Captain Parker, who seems to have acted as cashier, for under date July 17th, in the books of Messrs. Marsh, Page, & Creed, is the entry of cash payment to Captain Parker of £200. The drawing of so large an amount leads us to infer



ADMIRAL LUTWIDGE.

From a miniature in the possession of the Misses Poole, Alsager.

that Lord Nelson, with his usual generosity, defrayed all travelling expenses.

That Captain Parker acted in this capacity is shown by the post-chaise owners in London sending in accounts at a later date, which Lord Nelson was sure were paid, and about which he wrote : " Captain Parker has one receipt for seven pounds odd, and I am sure everything is paid, therefore do not pay a farthing." On August 1st he wrote again to Lady Hamilton : " I send you one receipt for money paid Mr. Dean, and although I have no receipts for the other journey you may rely that [all accounts were paid] by James. Captain Parker says they were each paid before I ever took a chaise a second time."

The account-keeping seems to have been very lax indeed on this tour, which is all the more singular in one so habitually business-like as was Lord Nelson.

In the next year his Lordship went a tour into Wales with Sir William Hamilton and party. The Admiral kept a record of outlays, which is absolutely amusing from its minuteness of detail.

To place the story of Lord Nelson and Captain Parker before the reader in a more comprehensible manner than could be attained by its interspersion with other matter, it will be better to continue it to its termination, which in all its sadness was close at hand, and then to resume the broken thread of the full history.

The holiday at Boxhill and Staines was but brief. At the end of the same month (July) Nelson resumed command, having been appointed to *L'Unité* off Sheerness, and Captain Parker to H.M.S. Sloop *Amaranthe*.

This severance disappointed his Lordship, who was anxious to attach him to himself, to which end he wrote to Sir Evan Nepean, Bart., of the Admiralty :—

"LONDON, July 26, 1801.

"SIR,—Captain Parker of H.M.S. Sloop *Amaranthe* under my command, having represented to me that his Sloop is not ready for sea, and as the services of Captain Parker will be very useful to me in my situation, I have to beg you will request their Lordships to grant him leave to be with me on the service I am employed on."

The request was at once conceded.

The next day Admiral and Captain joined *L'Unité* at Sheerness. At this point Sir Harris Nicolas exclaims, "Captain Edward Thornborough Parker, to whom Lord Nelson became so much attached as to call him 'his son.'" The affection already existed.

That same day Lord Nelson dined with Admiral Graeme, who had lost an arm, and the Commander of the Troops, who had lost a leg, which caused his Lordship to remark humorously that they might be caricatured as the lame defenders of England.

Two days later Lord Nelson wrote to Lady Hamilton : "Parker desires his compliments and shall expect your letter to-morrow." This having duly come to hand, Captain Parker replied from Deal, July 30th, giving an interesting account of Lord Nelson's activity and energetic directions to the fleet :—

"July 30, 1801.

"MY LADY,—I hope Lord Nelson has told you how busily I have been engaged ; if not, you must believe me

when I say nothing could have prevented my acknowledging your very kind and affectionate letter before. He is, thank God, extremely well and in good health. We got down to Sheerness very quick and well, and were received by the acclamations of the people, who looked with wild but affectionate amazement at him who was once more going to step forward in defence of his country. He is the cleverest and quickest man and the most zealous in the world. In the short time we were at Sheerness he regulated and gave orders for 30 of the ships under his command, made every one pleased, filled them with emulation, and set them on the *qui vive*. How, what I feel when I reflect how warmly I am attached to so great and noble a patron! But I fear I am a little envied.

"We arrived at Deal last night, and this morning the Flag was hoisted on board the *Leyden*, but it is to be removed to the *Medusa*, and she is now in sight coming in. I believe we shall then take a peep at them on the coast of France, and see what can be done," etc.

Little recked the brave light heart of what that peep at France would mean to him! The loss of life, preceded by intense suffering borne most exemplarily.

On August 16th, 1801, very little more than a fortnight after writing so full of health and spirits, his thigh was shattered in two places in an attack on the enemy's flotilla at Boulogne, moored near the entrance to the harbour.

Captain Parker had the command, being sent out by the Admiral to attack the flotilla, and his account to his chief of the unfortunate enterprise can only evoke warm admiration when his great sufferings are borne in mind.

Truly a hero! for no murmur of his pain escapes him, no thought of self is apparent—a credit in every way to his lord's training.

"16th August, 1801.

"MY LORD,—After the compleat arrangement which we made, the perfect good understanding and regularity with which the Boats you did me the honour to put under my command left the *Medusa*, I have an anxious feeling to explain to your Lordship the failure of an enterprise that on its outset promised every success.

"Agreeably to your Lordship's Instructions I proceeded with the 2nd Division of the Boats under my Direction 30 m. N.— the half of which were under the Direction of Lieutenant Williams, Jun^r, of the *Medusa* —to attack that part of the Enemy's Flotilla appointed for me, and at half-past twelve I had the good fortune to find myself close to them, when I ordered L^t Williams with his Sub-Division to push on to attack the Vessels to the Northward of me, while I with others run alongside a large Brig off the Mole Head, wearing the Commodore's Pennant. It is at this moment that I feel myself at a loss to do justice to the Officers and Crew of the *Medusa* who were in the same Boat with me, and to Lieutenant Langford, the

Officers and Crew of the same Ship, who nobly seconded us in the Barge until all her Crew were killed or wounded, and to the Hon. Mr. Cathcart, who commanded the *Medusa's* Cutter and sustained the attack with the greatest intrepidity, until the Desperate Situation I was left in oblig'd me to call him to the assistance of the sufferers in my own Boat. The Boat was no sooner alongside than we attempted to board her, but [?] baffled all our endeavours, and an instantaneous Discharge of her Guns and small Arms from about two hundred Soldiers in the Gunwale knock'd myself, Mr. Kirby, the Master of the *Medusa*, and Mr. Gore, a Midshipman, with two-thirds of the Crew, upon our backs into the boat, all either kill'd or desperately wounded. The Barge and the Cutter being on the outside shoved off with the tide, but the flat Boat in which I was hung alongside, and as there was not an officer or man left to govern she must have fallen into the hands of the Enemy had not Mr. Cathcart taken her in tow and carry'd her off.

"Mr. Williams led the Sub-Division up to the Enemy with the most intrepid gallantry, took one Lugger, and attacked a Brig along. I am concern'd to say they suffer'd equally with ourselves, and was under the necessity of retreating; but not until nearly the whole of his Boat's Crew was kill'd or wounded, and Mr. William Bristow, mate on the *Medusa's* Cutter, under Lieutenant Stewart, was kill'd.

"I now feel it my duty to assure your Lordship that nothing could surpass the Zeal, Courage, and [?] of every description of Officer and man under my

Command, and I am sorry that my words fall short of their merits, though we could not accomplish the object we were order'd to."¹

The French flotilla were chained together, and of this the ardent young men on the British boats were unaware; they had not a chance in the attack, and the results in consequence were most direful. Owing to the sacrifice of so many valuable lives, the British fleet had to remain stationary until fresh relays of officers and men were sent out to replace those killed and wounded.

The brave youths thus sacrificed were full of promise in their profession. Mr. William Gore, who lost his life (son of Lieutenant Gore of the British Infantry), was only in his sixteenth year, and had the making in him of a most valuable officer. Prior to receiving the wound that terminated his life, he was wounded by five musket-balls in attempting to board, and every man in the boat was, as wrote Captain Parker, either killed or wounded. The bravery of Mr. Bristow, who also fell, was equally meritorious.

The injury to Captain Parker's thigh was so high up that, if the bone did not unite, the limb could not be amputated with much hope of saving life. He was removed to Deal, and for a time went on better than could be expected, and, having youth on his side, it was hoped that his life would be spared.

¹ This long letter was not, of course, written by poor Parker. He evidently dictated it, and on reading it over managed to scrawl the words "with the greatest intrepidity, until the Desperate Situation I was left in oblig'd me to call him to the assistance of the sufferers in my own Boat." This effort exhausted him, and the letter is unsigned

To Lady Hamilton, knowing how full of sympathy she would be for the young man's serious misadventure, Lord Nelson wrote on August 19th :—

"Dear Parker is much better. I am sure he will be much gratified by your uniform kindness. When I left him to go on board yesterday, for I would not stay on shore, he got hold of my hand and cried like a child. However, I promised to come on shore this morning to see him, and nothing else could have got me out of the ship, for the beach is very uncomfortable to land upon."

From all notes at this juncture no other inference can be drawn than that Edward Thornborough Parker was all in all to Lord Nelson. No father could have been more genuinely concerned over a hopeless mishap to a much-loved son. In his various letters he calls him "my son," "my child," yet blood-relationship between them there was none.

The injured youth lingered on, the Admiral hoping against hope. On September 20th he addressed Dr. Baird, who had been ceaseless in his attendance and efforts to sustain life and save the limb :—

"MY DEAR DOCTOR,—Your kind letter has given me hopes of my dear Parker ; he is my child, for I found him in distress. I am prepared for the worst, though I still hope. Pray tell me as often as you can. Would I be useful ? I would come on shore and nurse him. I rely on your abilities, and if his life is spared, that you, under the blessing of God, are fully equal to be the instrument."

A few days after the accident Nelson wrote to Sir William Hamilton, begging him to go to Deal to see him, in company with Lady Hamilton and Mrs. William Nelson, "as soon as your affairs will allow you. It will give me great pleasure, and will delight poor dear little Parker ; therefore, for charity's sake, come down."

The party did go to Deal for some little time, and returned home on September 21st.

The hopeful account from Dr. Baird was quickly followed by another to tell that a change for the worse had taken place, and that the end could not be far off.

To Mr. Davison, his sure sympathiser, the heart-broken Admiral wrote on September 21st: "You will join me in affliction for the fate of my good little Parker. Yesterday at two O'Clock in the afternoon I was with him, so was Lady Hamilton, Sir William, and Mrs. Nelson. He was so well that I was for the first moment sanguine in my hopes of his recovery. At ten O'Clock the great artery burst, and now he is at death's door, if not departed this life. You will judge our feelings ; and, to mend all, Lady Hamilton with her party went to London this morning."

Captain Parker's own father was at Deal also during the illness of his son.

Once more the flickering light of life made the effort that too often carries hope when it is the premonitory symptom of its extinction. In lightness of heart, hopeful that life might yet be spared, the anxious Admiral wrote to Miss Parker, Westgate, Gloucestershire, the young man's sister :—

"Lord Nelson from his heart congratulates Miss Parker on the happy prospect of her dear brother's recovery. Captain Parker will be, he hopes for life, the dear son and friend of

"NELSON AND BRONTE."

An unknown hand has added a few lines to the above which show that his Lordship had been misinformed as to the improvement in young Parker's health :—

"The above was a flattering account given to Lord Nelson yesterday by Captain Bedford, who took it from hearsay from your brother's asking if the *Amazon* had sailed. His Lordship sailed this morning at six o'clock, I find, (after staying in port till the last minute), with his heart full of grief. The Doctor wrote to him at five o'clock this morning.

"One O'Clock a.m. I have just seen him and think him worse, and incoherent in his speech."

To Dr. Baird from Lord Nelson, September 24th :
"I shall probably be here by Sunday, and then I hope you will let me see my son, my dear Parker."

He had had his leg amputated, and there was no hope left ; soon all was over, and again Lord Nelson besought the sympathy of Mr. Davison (September 27th) : "My dear Parker left this world for a better at nine o'clock this morning. They tell me a happy release, but I cannot bring myself to say I am glad he is gone ; it would be a lie, for I am grieved almost to death."

In the hope that the Admiralty would defray the expenses of the young hero's obsequies, his Lordship solicited Sir Evan Nepean of that department, September 28th :—

“SIR,—Captain Parker having died in consequence of the wounds he received on the 16th of last month, I have given directions for his being buried this day with all honours and respect due to so meritorious and gallant an Officer. And I have to request that their Lordships will be pleased to direct the Sick and Hurt Board to defray all the expenses of his lodgings, etc., on the shore, and also his funeral.”

In acknowledging the intimation of Dr. Baird that all was over, Lord Nelson wrote : “Although the contents of your letter were not unexpected, yet I am sure you will judge of my feelings. I feel all was done that was possible. God's will be done. I beg that his hair may be cut off and given to me ; it shall remain and be buried with me.”

The hair was cut off and sent to Lady Hamilton in a little box by Lord Nelson, accompanied by a few lines from him in which he said “he valued it more than if Parker had left him a bulse of diamonds,” and he instructed her to “keep some for poor Nelson.”

Upon the day of interment all the ships in the Downs under command of Lord Nelson had their pennants half-mast high, yards reversed. At 12 noon minute guns were fired from the *Amazon* and the

shore alternately, and the procession walked as follows :—

200 of the Derbyshire Regiment, arms reversed.
Military band with drums muffled and tied with
crape, playing the Dead March.

Secretaries of Admirals Nelson and Lutwidge and
other officers, two and two.

The Coffin carried by six Captains.

Chief Mourners—Admirals Nelson and Lutwidge
and Lord George Cavendish.

Officers of the Army and Navy, two and two.

Pilots, two and two.

Servants, two and two.

Captain Parker was buried at Deal. It was hoped that the Admiralty would defray expense of apartments and funeral ; “ if not,” wrote Lord Nelson, “ it will fall very heavy on me.”

The Admiralty¹ refused to be responsible for the expenses attendant on the young man's injuries, his lodgings or funeral ; consequently Lord Nelson undertook to pay all himself, and further consented to settle all debts left unpaid by Captain Parker, time being allowed ; all of which was only covered by an outlay of £200. He also erected a monument to his memory costing £50, and spent a similar sum upon a silver cup for Dr. Baird in recognition of his services.

The *Naval Chronicle* says : “ His merits must have been large to have been raised to the rank of Master

¹ See Appendix for copy of Admiralty Full Pay Ledger, entrance referring to “ E. T. Parker.”

and Commander when scarcely 21 years of age, to have been distinguished so young in the annals of England in its most illustrious era, and above all to have been transmitted to posterity as the good and gallant friend and able assistant of the greatest of our Naval Heroes."

Some pretty verses also appear in the *Naval Chronicle* on the subject of the death of Captain Parker and the affectionate regard of his chief.

LINES ON THE DEATH OF CAPTAIN PARKER.

BY A LADY.

Where her proud cliffs majestic Dover rears,
Whose white and guardian breast the surges lave,
Why sweeps that sound of Death, and why appears
The troubled spirit of the neighb'ring wave?

Why does the voice of public sorrow swell?
Why pours the gallant breast that manly sigh?
Why does the tear of gen'rous anguish dwell
On Nelson's cheek, and dim his ardent eye?

While on the couch of pain the sufferer lay
'Twas there the spirit of the Hero shone,
Gave to his sinking eyes a saint-like ray,
And marked his death with Glory all its own.

One proud distinction marks the glorious grave,
That he, from whom thine heart its ardour drew,
To thee Affection's latest tribute gave
And bade his gallant friend a fond adieu!

How fills my eye, how swells my heart to say,
Parker, farewell! yet while the gen'rous flame
Of British virtue lives shall Britain pay
The grateful tears that consecrate thy name.

Here it may be opportunely remarked how frequently Lord Nelson called Captain Parker his "child," his "son" ; but he was not his son : therefore writing of his adopted daughter as "My dear Child" or signing himself her "Father" is valueless as evidence of fact, for it was common as phraseology even among his Lordship's middies, whom he called his *family* or his *children*. "All my Children are well except Andrews." "Bromwich and all my dear good Children are well."

Writing to Sir Thomas Troubridge on April 4th, 1801, Nelson says : "I am, my dear Troubridge, very candidly pleased respecting the promotion. My duty pointed out the promotion of the first Lieutenant of the *Elephant*, and all my own children are neglected."

Lord St. Vincent used similar language when writing of his midshipmen or those of older growth, as of Captain Bowen, "Treat him well ; he is my dear Child."

On the day of the funeral Lord Nelson wrote to Lady Hamilton : "I wish it was over for all our sakes ; then we must endeavour to cheer up, and although we cannot forget our Parker, yet we shall have the comfortable reflection how we loved him and how deserving he was of our love."

Our Parker, *our* love, here : again, is it not apparent that there was some conjunction, and that a coincident interest was expected from her Ladyship? Yet her affectionate services could only have been requisitioned by his Lordship, for the young man was not in Lady Hamilton's company long enough to form an eminent

friendship ; he was merely on an intimate footing from November 1800 to January 1801, and a fortnight in



ADMIRAL LORD NELSON.
From miniature by D. Orme.

July. Everything seems to point to more than appears on the surface. Lady Hamilton asked Lord Nelson if he had seen Parker after death, and he

answered, "No, if I had the sight would have killed me."

We note that for some months after the young man's death Lord Nelson sealed his letters with black wax.

Parker had no known great outlets for his income, nor does he seem to have been personally extravagant, yet he died in so much debt that his patron could not afford to settle with creditors without time being allowed; there must have been some hidden drain to absorb the cash.

After showing much sympathy and respect for the father of Captain Parker, Nelson made the painful discovery that the parent was disreputable, and traded on the sympathy evoked by his son's misfortunes. Lord Nelson discovered his real character when too late to save his money, and it is singular his Lordship did not know his reputation before.

He extracted £70 out of his Lordship before he knew he was a fraud; then he warned Lady Hamilton to give him nothing if he applied to her, writing: "I am so vexed that he should have belonged to our dear Parker. I have done with the wretch for ever. I hope he has got nothing from you, and if you have promised him anything *do not send it.*" He had contrived to obtain £20 from Lord Nelson by pretending that he had lost his purse with £20 in it, and said he had no money to buy mourning for his son, and at the same time he had upon him £47, the greater part of which he had swindled out of one and another of the officers.

In acknowledging the intimation of Parker's death (October 3rd) Mr. A. Davison referred to a secret

trouble which is at no time apparent in open correspondence: "If there be a better world, which we are taught to believe there is, he must be gone there to enjoy it, and possibly to be relieved of troubles in this, had he survived [such], as to have involved him in misery." It has already been suggested that Mr. Davison had been taken into confidence. To all appearance Parker had a life that might be envied, so favoured was he by his chief. The remark of Mr. Davison must have been drawn forth by the knowledge that his future pathway in life was not entirely clear.

Another remarkable link which seems to connect Captain Parker with little Horatia presents itself in a passage written to Lady Hamilton on the day preceding the death, in which Nelson declared his intention of probably taking the child to Merton Place, his newly acquired property in Surrey. Up to that date, September 26th, 1801, she had always been the "god-child" in correspondence with Lady Hamilton. The adoption or personal charge, first appears, as stated, on the day before the death of Parker.

"Whatever, my dear Emma, you do for my little charge I must be pleased with. Probably she will be lodged at Merton, at least in the Spring, when she can have the benefit of our walks. It will make the poor mother happy, I am sure."

Their companionship would please "the poor mother," who could not openly own the child. The use of the phrase "the poor mother" on that special day, so different from all former light-hearted strains,

is still more significant; and there is no mysterious mention of the father, nor does the name of Mr. Thomson ever again appear in Lord Nelson's correspondence.

The child would be to him a treasure left by the one whom he loved best on earth, the sight of whose dead body he declared would have killed him, and so the coffin was closed without that one last look.

That Lord Nelson should regard the child as his special charge, adopt it, and lavish upon it his heart's best love was but natural, for it would give him satisfaction that it was in his power to protect and make happy the offspring of him whom he had loved and lost, and the only consolation left would be the love of the little child. As he had been light-hearted with the father, what more likely than that he would be playful with and amuse the child by romping with her on the floor, as Mrs. Gibson said?

A day or two after Parker's funeral we find in a letter to Lady Hamilton, October 3rd: "I shall long to have a picture of the little one—you will send it to me—but very soon I shall see the original, and then I shall be happy. Do not think I am seriously unwell, but I am naturally very low. What have I to raise my spirits? Nothing, the loss of my friend, the loss of Parker."

Who the mother was we may never know, nor is it requisite. The child would surely be as dear to the nation as that of Captain Parker whom Nelson loved and called his "son" as if she were Nelson's own. Parker was good to Nelson, and infused into his life

the few bright spots, of the scarcity of which he so bitterly complained.

No doubt Lady Hamilton was sent for to Deal, in view of a probably fatal termination to the young man's injuries, to talk over what it was more prudent not to write, and to arrange for the child's future to the satisfaction of the dying father.

The child's existence was never concealed from the time it was handed to Mrs. Gibson's care, though its parentage was not disclosed. Mrs. Gibson, who had the best opportunity of judging, does not appear to have connected Lady Hamilton with the child in her own mind ; nor does she at any time seem to have said so much to her own immediate relatives, who would have transmitted some suspicion to those deputed by Mrs. Ward (Miss Nelson) to interview them on her behalf as to what they knew of her childhood.

But even after the lapse of many years, when evidence might have been given with impunity, none was forthcoming, and Mrs. Johnstone, the daughter, could only relate that Lord Nelson went frequently and played with the child, and this may readily be considered accurate ; but though Lady Hamilton sometimes accompanied him she did not seem interested. Lady Hamilton always said the child was adopted by Lord Nelson out of compassion. It was from the first taken openly to Sir William's house in Piccadilly, and we may observe that at no time did Lady Nelson regard it as related either to Lady Hamilton or Lord Nelson, nor was its name in any way introduced into the family quarrels.

To account for the acquiescence of Sir William to the child's presence in his house, recent biographers have stated that the ex-Ambassador was aged, a dupe to passing events, and in a mental condition approaching imbecility.

Such assertions are not proofs, but a wrong to the dead, and the lie still lives. Two letters written by Sir William at the time of Parker's death will unquestionably confute such statements. He was at Warwick Castle when he received the news of the Captain's death, and his letter to his wife shows that his faith in wife and friend had solid basis. He perfectly understood their position, in fact was responsible for it; and she herself wrote, when both were gone for ever, that having been the confidante of two such men as Sir William Hamilton and Lord Nelson, she felt herself superior to vain tittle-tattling women.

"I was not, my dear Emma," wrote Sir William, "the least surprised by the account I received from you of the brave young Parker's death. What comfort can I give you in a case where there is no remedy? We must cherish his memory, and ever do him justice when we speak of the glorious attempt he made at Boulogne, and the exemplary courage and patience with which he bore his misfortune, and of which you and I were eye-witnesses. I am sorry he died hard—youth will struggle with death—but perhaps he might not feel so much as he appeared to do in the convulsion of death. I flatter myself that Lord Nelson, after he has done everything he can do to show his respect for his departed friend, will console himself; but I am sorry

we are not with him at this cruel moment. The accident to the clock in the Nelson room was really singular, but I hope that you and I think pretty nearly alike as to such sort of accidents.

“WILLIAM HAMILTON.”

Nothing defective is apparent in Sir William's intellect, and still less will traces of its waning be found in the following lines, written also in October 1801 from Warwick Castle, where he was visiting his relative Lord Warwick. Having occasion to write to his nephew and heir (Charles Greville) about the Milford property, he added some remarks about Lord Warwick himself which will amply show that Sir William was quite awake to what was going on around him. The very style of the letter certifies that he was not in his dotage, and about the most unlikely among men to be duped. Had there been any truth in that which has been asserted of Nelson and Lady Hamilton, the old gentleman would have found them both out.

“*Entre nous*,” he writes to Mr. Greville, “although I was delighted with the local and the charming family, I was bored to death by his Lordship's eternal talk and stories, chiefly of himself, as to strength, bravery, knowledge of improvement, so as to be now actually one of the richest men in England, having paid all his father's and his own debts, and then by a parenthesis (except one to me, which by accident was yet unpaid), [he] went on with great composure in the same rhapsody of incoherent boasting. In short, I should be ungrateful if I did not feel the affection

shown me during this visit from all the family, but it would drive me mad was I obliged to live a month with him. He does not give an echoe fair play. I gave him, however, 2 or 3 hints that he should allow other people to say a word now and then, by which I got in a good story or two of mine; but alas! I fear he is on that part incorrigible, and as he sees only persons that are bound to listen to him he will go on talking to all eternity. This is really the true picture. As I believe you know, Emma sent an express with news of peace, by which, though I paid, Lord W. gave the Corporation the news 10 hours before the regular arrived."

This the letter of a dotard! And to the last day of his life Sir William's senses were equally keen.

BOOK III.

Nelson homeless, ill, and miserable—Thinks of retiring to Bronte—Changes his mind and wants a house within ten miles of London—Lady Hamilton to look for one—No leave of absence obtainable—Merton Place bought and furnished without Nelson seeing it—Admiral Troubridge—Nelson's thoughtfulness and mastery of detail—He decides to buy a book on farming—Sir William Hamilton's appreciation of his wife—Mr. Davison's kindness—Mr. and Mrs. Matcham—The cost of Merton Place—Mrs. W. Nelson's news—Nelson's love for his good old father, who decides to live at Merton, but dies before taking up his residence there—The Rev. William Nelson at his best—Monetary anxieties—A tour in Wales—Nelson consults Dr. Moseley of Chelsea about his eye—The Beckford-Hamilton Peerage scheme—Nelson's nieces—Mrs. W. Nelson quotes Scripture when she writes on a Sunday—Nelson arranges to allow Mrs. Bolton £100 a year for three years—Lady Hamilton writes to the Right Hon. George Rose on behalf of Mr. Bolton—Nelson applies for an increase of pension—Lady Hamilton, Mrs. W. Nelson, and Nelson nurse Sir William—A solemn legacy—Lady Hamilton's dower—She goes on a round of visits amongst Nelson's relatives—The Queen of Naples writes a letter of condolence—The Hamilton family are kind—Greville inherits—Lady Hamilton at Hilborough when Nelson leaves for the Mediterranean—Match-making—Unbroken friendship with the Nelson family—More forged letters—Little Emma—Letter of Nelson to his friend Mr. Marsh—Mr. Davison in the Marshalsea for bribery—Captain Hoste—Mr. Fellowes—The justice of Lord St. Vincent—Letter to Admiral Lutwidge—Nelson unable to spend Christmas at Merton.

BOOK III.

MERTON.

OWING to the miserable dissensions with Lady Nelson, Lord Nelson had resumed sea life January 13th, 1801, though he was perfectly unfitted, both as regards his health and spirits, to take up the arduous responsibilities of his position at sea, and he quickly regretted the step he had taken, feeling that he had every need of care and good nursing. His letters teem with sad complaints of his discomforts, and he expresses his constant desire to burst into tears. He longed for quiet rather than the turmoil of warfare, and made up his mind that, when he could be dispensed with, he would go and reside at Bronte. He several times mentioned this intention to Lady Hamilton, hoping to see her and Sir William again before he set out for Bronte. This proposed absence from England when the Hamiltons were settled in their newly furnished house in Piccadilly shows that he did not seek permanent companionship with them, though in all probability, if he had settled in the South of Europe, they would have followed, as they had promised the Queen of Naples they would return, and Italy offered

to the trio more prospect of happiness than had fallen to their portion since their return to England.

On April 11th, 1801, Lord Nelson still adhered to his resolve to live at Bronte, and so he informs Lady Hamilton: "My dearest Friend, I have answered the King of Naples' letter, and have told him that in six weeks after the peace I hope to be at his feet, for that it is my intention to go to Bronte. I can assure you that I am fixed to live a country life, and to have many (I hope), years of comfort, which God knows I never yet had—only moments of happiness, but the case shall be altered. I tell you, my dear good friend, all my little plans, for I know you did and I hope always will take a lively interest in my happiness." If the tares and wheat of Nelsonian correspondence were properly sorted, it would be but justice to Nelson.

The first time Lord Nelson mentioned a desire to take a house of his own in England was in May 1801. He hoped to arrive in England in June, and would look for a house about ten miles from London. He wrote that he had never known more than moments of happiness, and he was fixed as fate to try and attain it after so many years of labour and anxiety.

The short holiday enjoyed by the Admiral in July afforded no time for house-hunting, and he set sail without having seen any place which he would desire to purchase.

Being unable to personally superintend the selection of a house, and yet desirous that his next home-coming should enable him to rest in a place actually his own, he begged Lady Hamilton to look for what she would

deem suitable, and he would instruct his solicitors to supply the purchase-money, and the furnishing he could raise money for. A house at Turnham Green was first thought of, and Lord Nelson urged its purchase at once, so anxious was he to have even any house where he could take shelter and call it his own; for, wrote he, "it is very extraordinary, but true, that the man who is pushed forward to defend his country has not in that country a place to lay his head in."

The air of the Baltic had completely prostrated him, and quiet and good nursing were most requisite—home comforts of which he had so suddenly been deprived by the conduct of his wife, who insisted on a selfish supremacy instead of the obedience which was temporarily imperative considering the necessities of the hour. The family solicitor said Lord Nelson had no alternative but to take the course he did, a course in which he was supported by Mr. Davison, and many others who knew the case. When Lady Nelson had left letters unreplyed to, and had gone to Brighton, without leaving her address, after exacting conditions to which it would be impossible to entirely conform, we do not wonder that her husband sought the intervention and co-operation of Lady Hamilton in looking out for a house while he was sea-bound, so that it could be made ready for his return to England? This is why he sought her assistance. Seemingly the most envied man, deservedly popular, yet truly might the lines be written of him:—

"If every man's internal care were written on his brow,
How many would our pity share that raise our envy now!"

Nelson could obtain no leave of absence to arrange these things for himself, and when Merton Place presented itself its purchase was decided upon without his once seeing it, much as he longed to do so. Of which detention on his ship, off the coast of Kent, he wrote of his superiors: "As Troubridge and the Earl are so cruel as to object to my coming to London to manage my own affairs, I must beg and entreat of you to work hard for me. Mess^{rs} Booth and Haslewood will manage all the law business." The purchase decided upon, again he asked Lady Hamilton to see about the furnishing. "How often have I said laughing that I would give you £500 to furnish a house for me; you promised me, and now I claim it. I trust to your own dear good heart for the fulfilment of it."

If Lady Hamilton acted on his behalf in providing for his comfort, which was of vital importance to him so broken in health as he was, it should be taken into consideration that Lady Nelson had ignored the last kind letter of her immortal husband, and he was thus left to shift for himself.

Considering how extremely Lady Nelson felt herself aggrieved, it would have been more consistent with her dignity, which she made so much effort to maintain, if she had declined the handsome annuity, the half of his income, allowed her by her husband, or at least had made some little demur before accepting it.

It will be as well to explain in a few words how Lord Nelson found himself in a subordinate position to Admiral Troubridge. Owing to Nelson's well-merited

representations on behalf of Admiral Troubridge in official quarters, he was appointed a Lord of the Admiralty. Among the splendid seamen under Nelson none better deserved honourable promotion than did this gallant officer. In every deed of daring during the desperate sea-fights that took place in the Mediterranean between 1798 and 1800, Troubridge was to the fore, in any secret mission Troubridge was the trusted emissary, and none spoke his praises more volubly than did Nelson; but from the time that Troubridge was appointed a Lord of the Admiralty, Nelson conceived that he tried to make his old commander feel under subjection to him. He many times bewails the little sympathy Troubridge has with his failing health, so much so that he at last petulantly wrote that he would make no more complaints to his unfeeling heart about his sufferings. At last he obtained permission to absent himself from his duties for ten days, dating from October 22nd, 1801. Nelson's reminiscences of what he had done for Troubridge are so explicit that it seems clear he had every right to have received more considerate treatment at his hands. What wise man would work a willing horse to death? But official powers put such pressure upon Nelson's service, and close application, that it is wondrous that the constitution of the hero did not entirely collapse under his afflictions and mental distresses. An extract from his letter to Lady Hamilton dated October 14th bears out these remarks. It was written to tell her that the long-sought-for leave of absence had at last arrived.

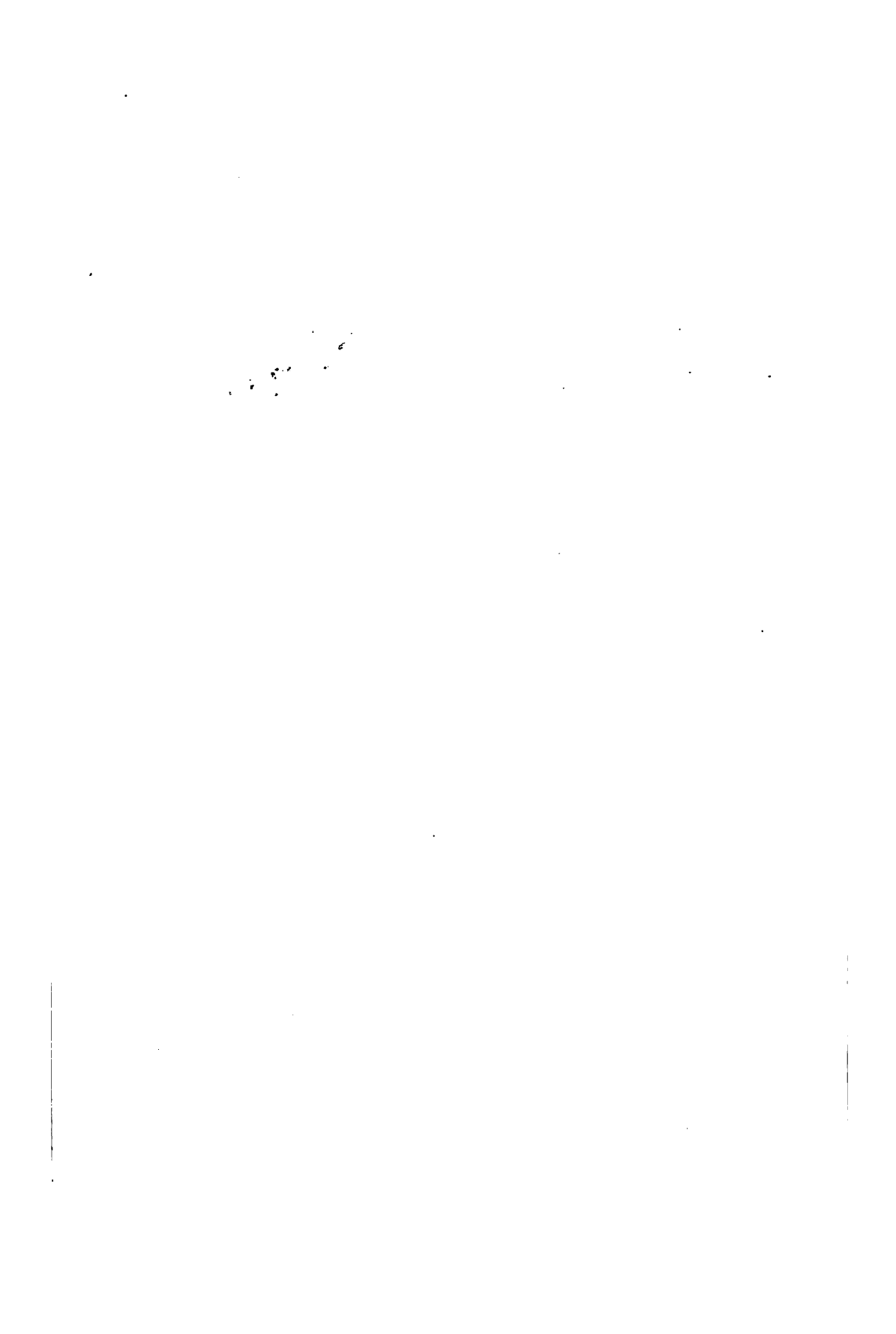
“To-morrow week all is over—no thanks to Sir Thomas. I believe the fault is all his, and he ought to have recollected that I got him the medal of the Nile. Who upheld him when he would have sunk under grief and mortification? Who placed him in such a situation in the Kingdom of Naples that he got by my public letters *titles, the Colonelcy of Marines, diamond boxes*, from the King of Naples, 1,000 ounces in money, for *no* expenses that I know of? Who got him £500 a year from the King of Naples? and however much he may abuse him, his pension will be regularly paid. Who brought his character into notice? Look at my public letters: *Nelson*—that Nelson that he now *Lords* it over. So much for gratitude. I forgive him, but, by God, I shall not forget it! He enjoys showing his power over me. Never mind. Altogether it will shorten my days. The day is very bad—blows, rains, and a great sea. My complaint has returned from absolutely fretting; and was it not for the kindness of all about me, they, d—— them, would have done me up long ago. I am anxiously waiting for your letters; they are my only comfort, for they are the only friendly ones I receive. Poor Captain Somerville is on board—himself, wife, and family make twenty without a servant, and he has only £100 a year to maintain them. He has been begging me to intercede with the Admiralty again; but I have been so *rebuffed* that my spirits are gone, and the *great* Troubridge has what we call *cowed* the spirits of Nelson; but I shall never forget it. He told me



MERTON PLACE, THE RESIDENCE OF LORD NELSON.

Sir William Hamilton fishing, Lady Hamilton talking to Cribb the gardener, Tom Bolton playing with the dog, Charlotte Nelson by Lady Hamilton.

From a drawing by E. H. Locker, third son of Captain Locker, Governor of Greenwich Hospital. Engraved in 1866.



that if I asked anything more, that I should get nothing. I suppose, alluding to poor Langford.¹ No wonder I am not well."

So tight was Nelson kept aboard that he actually wrote that he thought he might go to London for a day to see about a house without any injury to the king's service.

Thus it will be seen how Lady Hamilton came to be agent in the purchase of the farm at Merton known as Merton Place. Nelson was held fast aboard ship, longing for a roof under which he might take the repose and enjoy the nursing he had really required for many months. He had no one to fall back upon but the woman whose capacities seemed unlimited, and who brightened his life with accounts of the home that she was preparing for him.

As the circumstances of Sir William Hamilton necessitated retrenchment, Nelson, with the most delicate sensibility, offered him the use of his house and table, though he desired that nothing of Sir William's should be taken there for permanency, such as his books, etc. ; for Nelson's idea was that this haven of rest was to be his very own, whence he would dispense his lavish hospitalities. The almost womanly interest taken in the new house by its owner brings out a new phase of his character, and the business-like entries show his usual conciseness. "I send by the coach a little parcel containing the keys of the plate-chest and the case of the tea-urn, and there is a case of

¹ The young officer badly wounded at the same time as Captain Parker during the attack upon Boulogne.

Colebrook Dale breakfast set and some other things" ; or, "I have sent in the parcel by the coach this day, two salt-cellars and two ladles, which will make four of each, as two are in the chest. You will also find spoons and forks sufficient for the present. If sheets are wanting for the beds, will you order some and let me have the bill? I should think that not a servant of Sir William's, I mean the cook, should be in the house, but I leave this and all other matters to your good management. Would to God I could come and take up my abode there, and if such a thing should happen that I go abroad, I can under my hand lend you the house, that no person can molest you, not that I have at present any idea of going anywhere but to Merton."

This last refers to his previous intention of going to live at Bronte. In giving directions to gather together his belongings at Merton there was one particularly sad request ; yet it shows how Lady Nelson had gone away, just as Mr. Haslewood wrote, after laying down exacting and unreasonable terms, and never returned even to remove her clothes. "The wardrobe is hers," wrote Nelson, September 21st, 1801, "and if any of her clothes are at Mr. Dodd's¹ they had better be separated from mine, and indeed what things are worth removing, to have them directly sent to Merton. I believe a bed or two belong to my father, but am not certain." About this time Lady Nelson took a house in Somerset Street, Portman Square.

Judging from the generous allowance made to Lady

¹ The household effects, pictures, etc., had been stored at Mr. Dodd's.

Nelson in life, and his provision for her after death, it seems certain that her husband would have allowed her to take anything or everything she desired ; but that she did not so desire is evident, for in the year following her husband's glorious death at Trafalgar she gave away a lock of his hair, accompanying it with a letter in which she said it was the *only* thing she had belonging to the late Lord Nelson !

Nelson desired that the house and furniture might be insured for three or four thousand pounds, so that all might not be lost in case of fire. He also decided to add a codicil to his will, and wrote to Lady Hamilton intimating his intention that the estate should be left in trust for their use. "We die not one moment the sooner by doing those acts, and if I die my property may as well go to those I tenderly regard as to those who hate me ; but I trust to live many years with those who love me." How willingly would Nelson have shared such pleasure with Lady Nelson at one time, and how cruelly deep her bitter sallies had rooted themselves in Nelson's tender heart when he had no memory but of their stings ! We note his child-like gratification : he wrote of the pigs, the poultry, the sheep, and said he would get a book on farming ! He counted the days before he would see his own Merton—only six, and he would be there. "No person there can take amiss our not visiting. The answer from me will always be very civil thanks, but that I wish to live retired. We shall have our sea friends ; and I know Sir William thinks they are the best."

The following letter written by Sir William Hamilton to Lord Nelson shows how highly he valued his wife, and how proud he was of her as a business woman catering for his and Nelson's comfort in true homely style :—

"MERTON, *October 16th, 1801.*

"MY DEAR LORD,—We have now inhabited your Lordship's premises some days, and I can now speak with some certainty. I have lived with our dear Emma several years. I know her merit, have a great opinion of the head and heart that God Almighty has been pleased to give her, but a seaman alone could have given a fine woman full power to choose and fit up a residence for him without seeing it himself. You are in *luck*, for in my conscience I verily believe that a place so suitable to your views could not have been found and at so cheap a rate ; for if you stay away three days longer I do not think you can have any wish but you will find it completed here ; and then the bargain was fortunately struck before an idea of peace got abroad. Now every estate in this neighbourhood has increased in value, and you might get a thousand pounds to-morrow for your bargain. The proximity to the Capital and the perfect retirement of this place are for your Lordship two points beyond estimation ; but the house is so comfortable, the furniture clean and good, and I never saw so many conveniences united in so small a compass. You have nothing but to come and enjoy it immediately, and you have a good mile

of pleasant dry walk around your own farm." Thus rambled on the old knight.

In August, while the farm was being prepared, Sir William went into Wales to inspect his property at Milford Haven. He sailed out some leagues, and examined Crow Rock, which was considered the greatest danger to ships entering the port; but two lighthouses erected by the indefatigable Mr. Greville's directions removed the danger at night, and the rock could be seen in the daytime. Sir William was delighted with the improvements, and said it would be a great town in three years if only there were peace; houses were rising up rapidly. To Lord Nelson he wrote: "We allow any one to build at their own expense at an easy ground rent, and to fall in at the expiration of three lives or sixty years."

When the purchase and furnishing of Merton Place was complete Lord Nelson was naturally anxious to see it. Sir William Hamilton, however, was absent on this tour, and readers will allow that some regard was paid to the proprieties of society by Lord Nelson, as this quotation from a letter he addressed to Lady Hamilton, September 28th, 1801, will show: "I wish I could see the place, but I fear that is impossible at present, [and if I could, you would not perhaps think it right for me to come now Sir William is away]." The bracketed sentence is in the original letter, and its omission by Pettigrew in his *Life of Lord Nelson*, Vol. II., p. 192, can find no justification.

The value of friendship is most frequently put to a severe test when money matters enter into the

Nelson's Friendships

relationship. Nelson certainly reckoned staunch friends, for his requirements tested their fidelity. The spontaneous offer of Mr. Alexander Davison to lend Nelson money at the time of his purchase of Merton Place, knowing that such purchase must exhaust Nelson's savings, shows the considerate generosity existing among the band of men whose noble lives supply us with so much that excites our sympathy and love.

"If you have settled for the house in Surrey you write me about, I am sure you must be in want of money to pay for it, and lest that should be the case I have written to my Bankers, Messrs. Vere, Lucadou, & Co., to honour whatever bills you may draw on them, with orders to those gentlemen to charge the same to my account. You may draw at sight on them whenever you please. In my absence this will be the easiest mode for you making your payments. We are all well here, and all unite in constant prayer for your happiness. God ever bless and protect you, my dear friend's affectionate

"ALEXANDER DAVISON."

This gentleman was on a visit to his sister, who was in distress owing to domestic calamity. Mr. Davison, it will be remembered, was the deputy commissioned by Nelson to signify to Lady Nelson that for the future she must have a separate establishment from her husband, and it is important to notice that the offer of an unlimited loan of money to enable Nelson to purchase and furnish his country home, the business of which was openly undertaken for him by Lady Hamilton,

received Mr. Davison's full sanction, as his act proves. Nelson had no alternative but to sever himself from Lady Nelson, and this was known to all his relations and friends. As further instance it may be stated that when Mr. Davison made this offer Nelson had already borrowed money from his brother-in-law, Mr. George Matcham, of Ashford Lodge, Surrey, who thereby gave his countenance to the proposed arrangement. This countenance and the support to Lady Hamilton which Mr. Matcham gave to the end of her life, and the absolute respect with which he and his family treated her Ladyship, are matters of the utmost importance in bringing forward a defence of the curious but innocent household at Merton Place. For Mr. George Matcham was in his day a remarkable man, both as a scientist and socially ; his personal career so notable and respectable, that the very mention of his name as favouring Lady Hamilton would be the best weapon to handle in the defence of her reputation. Why he has been excluded from description in Nelsonian memoirs can have but one explanation, namely, that his position was so powerful as to carry too much weight in favour of the patriotic woman, whom writer after writer has shamelessly sought to traduce, and by so misleading the reading public leave an indelible stain on her fame. Mr. Matcham was wealthy, and therefore had no need of Nelson for monetary assistance ; he was in the best position to openly assert his partisanship, for he was in every way independent of every one. And with whom did he side ? Certainly not with Lady Nelson !

As previous biographers have not enlarged upon

the record of Mr. Matcham, it will be well here to introduce a concise memoir of this illustrious traveller, for the reason that his name frequently occurs in later correspondence, and the full value of his adherence will be more clearly perceived when his own character is understood.

George Matcham, Esq., was the only son of Simon Matcham, Esq., Superintendent of the Marine of the East India Company, and Senior Member in Council of the Presidency of Bombay, by Elizabeth, daughter of Hugh Bidwell, Esq., of Exeter, whose family derived their name from the ancient manor of Bidwell.

Mr. Matcham's father was the only son of Simon Matcham of Fittleford, Co. Dorset, descended from Thomas Matcham, Gent, who purchased the manor of Up Wimborne and Oakley Wood, formerly belonging to the Abbey of Tewkesbury, at the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII.

Educated at the Charterhouse, Mr. George Matcham entered the service of the East India Company, and became their resident at Baroche until 1783, when the station was ceded to the Mahrattas. He was very fond of travel, and varied his routes whenever he had occasion to visit England; but on his final return he, having inherited the family property, hired a vessel and prolonged his examinations of different countries, visiting Persia, Arabia, Egypt, Asia Minor, Turkey, Greece and the Greek islands, Hungary, and most of the Courts included in the Continental tour. Attended only by an Arab suite, he performed a journey on horseback from Bagdad

to Pera, through the countries' anciently known as Mesopotamia, Armenia, Cappadocia, etc., and traversed the wild region of the Kurds. He kept a record of his travels, and the peculiarities of the countries through which he passed. One journey from Aleppo across the Desert of Arabia to Bagdad and down the Tigris he made in company with Eyles Irwin in 1781.¹ After a presentation at the Court of the Emperor Joseph II., he had the honour of a private interview with that sovereign in order to give an outline of his adventures; and the monarch expressed regret that similar opportunities of observation were denied to himself. Mr. Matcham was very intimate with the greatest diplomatists of the day, with Sir Murray Keith at Vienna, and with Sir Joseph Yorke at the Hague, to whom he was much attached. Soon after his return to England in 1785, he married Catherine, youngest daughter of the Rev. Edmund Nelson, sister of Captain Horatio Nelson, and lived in affectionate union with her for forty-six years, the lady surviving him. He was particularly averse to public occupations, but employed his time in pursuits suitable to English gentlemen. In intervals between his studies, to which he was diligently attached, he superintended the education of his children, and improved his large estates in Hampshire and Sussex by plantations, which at that time were of considerable extent.

In 1802 he obtained a patent for an apparatus applicable to the preservation of ships in danger of wreck. His

¹ See *Travels of Eyles Irwin*, wherein Mr. Matcham is mentioned in terms of cordial esteem.

suggestion to the Board of Admiralty on the advantage of a breakwater formed of piles had a long precedence in point of time over any other practical application for the same purpose, and to his recommendation the public are indebted for the conversion of a portion of St. James's Park into the pleasure-grounds near the Palace which occupy the place of what was then marshy meadow ; and the semi-official notice of this change in the Government papers of the day was actually couched in the precise terms of his own letter written on the subject. He wrote out a variety of hints on public improvements, and private economy, which he printed for the amusement of his family.

He was a man not likely to be easily forgotten by those honoured with his friendship. There was a total absence of self-interest in his character, and the welfare of his family constantly occupied his mind. What grander testimonial to a good life could there be than the words used in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for March 1833 in recording the death of this gifted gentleman ?

“ In cherishing the remembrance of his many private excellencies and virtues his children need surely not regret the absence of those public distinctions which by a course of public activity, subservient behaviour, or obtrusive solicitation, he might possibly have obtained for himself or them ; and referring to his character in all the relations of social life, whether as a husband, a father, a neighbour, a Christian, or a man, they may regard him as an example to themselves and their posterity truly worthy of imitation.”

Mr. Matcham, as this brief memoir clearly shows, was a man of the highest character and reputation. His name constantly occurs in the correspondence of the Nelson family, as one of the friends on intimate visiting terms with Lady Hamilton. Yet a man of such character would not assume a friendship with a lady whom he did not respect, and it may reasonably be asked why he has been kept in the background, and his name passed over as if he were a personage of but little import. He perfectly well understood the relations between Nelson and the Hamiltons, and in later life none were more indignant at the tales that linked together the names of Nelson and Lady Hamilton, than were Mr. and Mrs. Matcham. They knew the innocency of those relations, how in the first instance the circumstances of war had brought them into close intimacy, an intimacy perfectly well understood by the whole fleet.

The cost of purchasing Merton was £9,000. Mr. Matcham lent £4,000 to Lord Nelson prior to Mr. Davison's generous offer, and a Mr. Graves lent £2,000. When the place was bought there were statues about the grounds; these Nelson desired should be removed, as he disapproved of them.

While doing so much in the interest of Nelson, the kind heart of Lady Hamilton caused her to express regret to him that Sir William had not a pony: he urged her to write to the Duke of Queensberry, a relative of Sir William's, and ask him to give a pony; this suggestion she promptly acted upon, and Sir William got his pony.

The officers about Nelson were full of pleasant anticipations of hearty welcome. Hardy sent word he had not lost his appetite, and Captains Gore and Sutton longed for the brown bread and butter. These were the sort of guests whom Nelson hoped to entertain in homely hospitality, and they all looked forward to many a happy hour in the new home.

The following letter from Mrs. William Nelson to Lady Hamilton is certain evidence that the presence in Lord Nelson's house of Lady Hamilton was regarded as the right and proper thing, and that the fact of her being there was considered to involve no reflection on her character is shown by the remarks about Mrs. Voller, whose reputation had suffered from malice in some way.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I had no Idea my Lord had been so ill as to keep his Bed, but *thank God* by your letter to-day he is much better ; that you will nurse him well I am very sure. He should take care and not go out too soon, for a second cold is always worse than the first.

"Poor Horatio sends me word he has got a bad cold and toothache ; he has not been in school for two days. I am sorry for Mrs. Voller, for it is very unpleasant to have one's character called in question, and Mr. Voller is quite right to take it up. I am glad she thinks Charlotte improved ; you are quite right to keep her hard at her studies. Mrs. Bolton came to me on Monday and left me yesterday. Mr. Bolton has just called upon the Doctor, and they are

gone together to Swaffham Fair [to see] if he can buy a Horse. Next Wednesday we go to Swaffham for the coursing meeting. The Ball is on Thursday, and Mrs. Yonge would be disappointed if I did not go. Another year I hope Charlotte will show off at the Ball."

Nelson's first thought and arrangement after his arrival at Merton on October 22nd, was to ensconce his venerable father, the Rev. Edmund Nelson of Burnham Thorpe, at Merton. A warm room and good nursing were necessities to the aged gentleman, who for some time had suffered from asthma and partial paralysis; he could no longer hold Divine Service, and could scarcely walk as far as the next house, which was close to his own. By slow stages he reached Merton, and the attentions he there received caused him to write most gratefully when he arrived at Bath, where he had to winter under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Matcham. These latter, he said, meditated a visit of a day or two to Merton when the bairns were returned to their respective academies, "*to wait upon Lady Hamilton and yourself.*" He desired thanks to Lady Hamilton for her care of a plaid shawl which had been sent to him, and he signed himself with respect to her and Sir William. All of which tends to show that the respectable Nelson family were all of one and the same mind as to the treatment by Lady Nelson of her husband, and that, failing in duty and consideration as she had, there had been no alternative for Nelson but the course of which they one and all approved.

Lord Nelson was anxious to refund Mr. Davison the money lent towards the purchase of Merton, and to this end he offered to sell some of the diamonds presented to him at one time and another ; but the small valuation set upon the stones by certain diamond merchants in London—Messrs. Rundell, Bridge, & Rundell—made him resolve not to part with them, but to ask Mr. Davison to wait for settlement. Before the end of the year, however, he did sell the diamonds from some of the articles presented to him, and substituted paste. With the money thus obtained he repaid Mr. Davison.

Nelson had other monetary troubles at this period, for on December 29th, 1801, he wrote as follows, to his old friends the bankers, Messrs. Marsh, Page, & Creed :—

"Most private. To be returned to me, as I consider this letter as a confidential communication to my friends.

"Mr. Tyson, my secretary, and as good a man as ever lived, has arrived, and I have an account with him which makes me his debtor about £4,000. There may be some set off, but I chuse to consider that the sum, and I not only wish but am fixed to pay him the day after he gets to London.

"Therefore I wish to prepare this money for him. If I have money in the funds (and I think I have India stock) it must be sold ; this, with my arrears of pay, will, I hope, go far towards raising the money, and if it will not I must trespass on your indulgence. I have the means to repay you

in (even if I lose my cause with L^d S^t V^t) £5,000 from the *Alcmene* Prizes, and near £3,000 from the *Lima* Convoy, and even Merton, any part of which I shall with pleasure make over to secure you in any advance. I have sold Diamonds to pay one person to whom I was indebted by his goodness in trusting me £3,000. *I take no shame to be poor.* Never for myself have I spent 6d. ; it has all gone to do honor to my country : whether the persons have deserved it or no is for their consideration, not for mine. I intended to have gone to Town to-day, but am not very well, and perhaps I have explained myself better in writing than by speaking, and give you time to reflect whether you can or not comply with my request. *Private.*"

Mr. and Mrs. Matcham accepted an invitation to Merton for the end of January 1802, when Sir William and Lady Hamilton were living there. We give a copy of Lord Nelson's letter to Mrs. Matcham. He was most anxious, now that he had a house of his own, to welcome every individual member of his family.

"MERTON, Dec. 29, 1801.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—Can you give me an idea when you may chuse to make us a visit at Merton? Suppose you set off on Monday the 11th of Jan^r and be with us in good time on Tuesday. But if any other time will suit you and Mr. Matcham better, let me know before next Monday. Any time will suit us. Lady Hamilton desires her best respects. The Doctor and Horace are

gone riding to Kingston, but are all well ; and with kindest regards to Mr. Matcham and all your family,

“ Believe me ever your affectionate Brother,
“NELSON AND BRONTE.”

On January 7th, 1801 [should be 1802], he again wrote :—

“ MY DEAR SISTER,—The 23rd January will suit us perfectly well, therefore let it rest for that day. . . . ”

And on January 21st, 1802 :—

“ MY DEAR SISTER,—I am truly sorry for the cause which has deprived us of the pleasure of seeing you and Mr. M. at Merton for the present ; but to say the truth I think a journey the latter end of April or beginning of May will afford more pleasure to all parties, for then you will, I trust, be quite well and our weather much better. With every affectionate wish for your getting rid of your cough, in which all the party joins most cordially,

“ Believe me,” etc.

Later in the year Mr. and Mrs. Matcham did visit Merton, when it was arranged that the whole party, with additions, should make a tour to the property of Sir William Hamilton in South Wales.

The Rev. Edmund Nelson had made definite arrangements to take up his permanent residence at Merton Place in the summer of 1802, but an illness which terminated fatally on April 25th of that year frustrated the design. He died at Bath, aged seventy-eight years.

What a different history might have been told to-day if only the life of the good and reverend gentleman had been prolonged, so that he could have dwelt for some length of time in the company of Nelson and the Hamiltons, thus giving his countenance to the combined household! But that he designed to do so is much in its favour, and he must have been well satisfied that there were sound reasons for the state of affairs.

Two letters written by the Rev. William Nelson to Lord Nelson concerning the death of their father show the Rev. William at his best. As sons, brothers, or sisters, the Nelson family were much attached to each other.

"BURNHAM, *May 8, 1802.*¹

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am very much concerned to find you continue so unwell, but I hope now all the melancholy scene has passed you, together with the approaching warm weather, you will be entirely recovered. I would not have you disturb yourself about my Father's affairs. If Mr. Davison or Mr. Marsh will only transmit me an account of what they have, I will soon settle it and also y^e division of our late Mother's when I come to London, so don't puzzle yourself or them about it. I don't think there will be above £10 in Kerrison's hands when he has paid the Curate. I shall leave orders with him to sell everything and bring the account to me. The funeral will be on Tuesday morning, and everything is ready, or nearly, to-day. We have sunk y^e Grave in the

¹ In possession of J. C. Holding, Esq., Southsea.

Chancel alongside our Mother's—plenty of room. Those who have possession of y^e Writing Box consider that in appointing Executors The Deceased always relies on them to examine his most secret and confidential papers, and it is left to them to destroy them or reveal them as to their discretion seems best ; and therefore if they are not on y^e Spot, the *Will* only (if necessary) ought to be examined and the rest remain untouched for y^e Executors.

“ I do not mean to say our Father had any secrets, I dare say not, but still y^e Papers should remain as they are till you and I can examine them at our leisure. The *Sermons* certainly shall not be destroyed yet ; there may be some which may be useful to me. You don't seem rightly to understand the Subject of dilapidations or to know that the Law considers *them* as first of Debts, and no legacies can be paid till they are discharged. If anything is due and not paid they would say our Father *died insolvent*, which sooner than it should be said, I would endeavour to pay myself. But they can't be much, perhaps not so little as Bolton thinks, but I should hope could scarcely reach £50. If Lord Walpole had a proper feeling for the family, or had a pride in the Name of Nelson being related to him, he would give it to me and not barter it away to serve Electioneering purposes. The Parishioners say enough about it. If their wishes would do—however, that is kind and flattering on their part. I can't say but y^e sight of the Place brings many pleasant things to remembrance, but then that is alloyed by y^e reflection of what I am here for, and perhaps for

the last time—at least for the last time one can call it *Home*.

“Bolton says you will come into £200 by our Sister Anne's Will, after our Father's death ; this I shall have to pay you in proper time. I hope to be able to come to London about y^e middle of June.

“I am glad the Boys are gone to School, but I am ashamed that Horace sh^d have any debts, however trifling, so much money as he has had since Xmas ; indeed you are too good to him, it is a mistaken kindness. If he gets into debt any more, make him pay it out of his Pocket Money. As for W^m Yonge, it is terrible ; he will ruin his Father if he goes on so. 'Tis only about Two years ago I interfered with his Father and he paid *Six Guineas* for him, and he had, I believe, an additional allowance on condition he would avoid it in future. His Father can't afford it.

“To be sure, thirty shillings is nothing in itself, but for such a youngster as Horace ! Little beginnings may end in large sums ; it should be checked in its bud.

“The Tables I wrote to you about I find were sent to Ipswich and sold with the House. Here is a Half-length painting of the second Lady Turner, if you have a mind to have it.

“My Love to my Lady.

“Y^r Affectionate Brother,

“W^m NELSON.

“I don't think I shall leave here before Thursday morning, as I shall have several trifles to pay after the funeral.

"Poor old Tom Goulty was taken ill the middle of last week and died on Monday. I believe he was about 72 or 73 years of age; never had scarce any illness in his Life."

"BURNHAM, *May 12th*, 1802.¹

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—We performed the last sad offices to y^e remains of our dear and highly esteemed Father yesterday, amidst y^e greatest number of people ever assembled here. I don't know any proper people were left out. I never saw a funeral conducted with greater regularity, silence, and respect. The Bearers were

Rev ^d Mr. Arch Deacon Yonge.	Mr. Crowe, Sen ^r .
Mr. Hoste.	Mr. Weatherhead.
Mr. Preedy.	Mr. Crowe, Jun ^r .

All the Farmers in both Parishes.

"Mr. Robert Nelson goes to London to-day, and will call upon you and will tell you all: he laments his friend more than anybody. I am afraid he will lose his Farm, they ask *so much*. I think Lord Walpole ought to have had a little more regard to y^e memory of a man he professed to esteem. I should think y^e presentation must have been signed 4 or 5 days after he died, and Everard ought to have had more decency. I have reason to think he wanted to be inducted yesterday, but he discovered his mistake in time. He sent his servant here for Mr. Wise, who happened not to be in y^e way at y^e moment, and y^e servant found out what was going on. If

¹ In possession of J. C. Holding, Esq., Southsea.

he had come he certainly would have been hissed out of y^e Parish ; you can't think what an Indignation y^e Idea has excited. But I am willing to hope he was ignorant our Father was not buried. I think Lord Walpole should not have put it in his power



THE REV. EDMUND NELSON, A.M.

From a miniature in the possession of George Matcham, Esq.

so soon. I paid the Coachman and Abraham *all their demands*, as they wished to be discharged immediately, amounting to £71 for wages, rent, Job Horses, Housekeeping, etc., so you nor Matcham are not to pay a farthing more. Abraham tells me our Father has at Bath in y^e Bankers' Hands £200 and

47 Guineas in his little Box ; that will, I hope, in a great measure pay the Undertaker there. The Carriage & Harness, etc., must be sold and brought to account ; no occasion to give the Coachman anything. I paid him near £34 for a Quarter advance, as he said y^e Quarter was begun. Mr. Bolton advised me to make them all perfectly satisfied. Abraham had a month's Wages in advance to take him to London or where he pleased, amounting to £2 12s. 6d., so you are to give him no more. *There are no Sermons.* Mr. Wise thinks my Father burnt them all himself last summer when he was here.

"The Archdeacon walked over the House and premises, and he said he very seldom saw better, and pointed out two or three things that he saw, and which y^e Bricklayer is now repairing and which may cost 10 or 12 shillings after that. He thinks if Mr. Everard behaved handsomely he would take £5 or £10 and quit us, but if he does his worse he don't see where he can get £20. Bolton and I go home in y^e morning, and he will come at y^e sale.

"Yours affectionately,

"W^m NELSON.

"*Wednesday evening.*—9 Rings given to

1. Mr. Wise.
2. Mr. Crowe, Sen^r.
3. Dr. Mord^t Martin.
4. Myself.
5. Mr. Bolton.
6. Mr. Rolfe,

7. Mr. Yonge.
8. Mrs Rolfe.
9. Mrs. Goulty."

The one voice raised to praise Lady Nelson was that of the lately deceased gentleman, Lord Nelson's amiable father; but he accorded as much praise to Lady Hamilton, and he was perfectly satisfied with the good qualities of both ladies, for they both extended to him their best care while he was with either of them. But even when mention is made of his daughter-in-law his chief praise refers to the comforts with which she supplies him personally; yet it is quite clear, in several of the confidences extended to his daughter Mrs. Matcham, that Lady Nelson's occasional fits of discontent caused him to write of her in a tone that made allowance for ill-temper.

For instance, when at Bath with Mrs. Nelson February 10th, 1796, he pleads probable bad health for her: "Mrs. N. is, I hope, in pretty good health, tho' now and then a little nervous from anxious expectations, Hopes and fears, passions not always under the controll of human wisdom."

"Easter Sunday, 1800.

"Long days and spring weather Invites us to look towards the country, and if present circumstances do not change it is fixed that about the middle of May we leave London and go to Roundwood, Lady N. intending to use the Yarmouth Baths instead of Brighton or elsewhere. I wish by such means she may pass her time tolerably easy, for I see only very

distant hopes of her Good Husband's return, without whom she cannot be very well in any place."

On October 20th, 1801, again we may take an extract from a letter to his daughter Mrs. Matcham, in which he makes reference to the unfortunate differences between Lord and Lady Nelson and the difficulties of his own position under the circumstances. He hoped the breach would not extend any further, as his part was very distressing. Lord Nelson (he wrote), when the definite Treaty was signed, would be set free from the service of the public, and then fix himself at Merton, his new purchase.

On November 9th, 1801, he writes: "Yesterday I came to Lady Nelson's House, No. 16, Somerset St, Portman Square, where I mean to stay a fortnight, and then go to your Brother at Merton." A few more lines show that he wisely forbore to take part in or encourage the quarrel, and made his visits from one to the other in a natural manner that certainly would not justify Lady Nelson in thinking that he endorsed her line of conduct with absolute satisfaction.

Even though he wrote so well of Lady Nelson, it must be remembered that she had grudged him the £500 her husband wished him to have out of the £10,000 awarded by the East India Company, which he on hearing her remarks refused to accept.

During the year 1802 Nelson resided for the most part quietly at Merton with Sir William and Lady Hamilton.

In July and August the party made a tour in Wales, supplemented by Dr. and Mrs. Nelson, Mr. and Mrs.

Matcham, and the Hon. Charles Greville, nephew and chosen heir to Sir William, to whose presence Nelson privately objected as being a bar to open conversation, for Nelson was accustomed to talk without restraint equally of kings or beggars. He was, however, a necessary accessory, inasmuch as the visit to Milford was to inspect and consider such improvements as Mr. Greville had designed in order to convert Milford into a harbour of eminence. In 1786 he had commenced his plans, and, with the view of continuing them on a more gigantic scale, he desired the valuable advice of Mr. George Matcham, and the consent of Sir William.

On returning to town Mr. Greville called upon Lord St. Vincent to lay before him the scheme for forming a naval establishment at Milford Haven, and to solicit his ideas. The Earl, however, was indisposed at the moment; but he replied, dating from the Admiralty, October 21st, 1802 :—

“I was under the Surgeon’s hands when you did me the honour to call this morning, and find it absolutely necessary to go out of town to-morrow; I therefore can only acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday’s date. The sketch is magnificent, but I fear too vast for a part of the country so little productive, and I do not conceive it probable that any ship of the line will ever resort to it, except by stress of weather or accident. In the latter event a dock might be useful, yet I have my doubts whether it would be beneficial to the public to fix a large establishment at Milford Haven. I will let

you know when I return to town, and I shall be very happy to receive any information upon the subject of your letter. I have the honour to be

“Very much yours,

“ST. VINCENT.”

Nelson found a growing trouble in his remaining eye, and on October 26th he consulted Dr. Mosely concerning it by letter :—

“I shall be in Town in a few days, and will endeavour to see you. I agree with you that (if the operation is necessary) the sooner it is done the better. The probable risk is for your suggestion ; I cannot spare very well another eye.

“Ever yours faithfully,

“NELSON AND BRONTE.”¹

Mr. William Beckford of Fonthill had devised a scheme to obtain a Peerage, using Sir William Hamilton as the medium. Beckford was an M.P., had married a daughter of the fourth Earl of Aboyne, was rich, imaginative, eccentric, and the author of a famous book, *The Caliph Vathek*. Being emphatically a man of ideas, and given to letting his imagination run away with him, he thought the Government might be induced to reward the services of his mother's cousin, Sir William Hamilton, by a Peerage, and arrange, in the Patent, for the coronet to revert to himself ; for he had long wished to be ennobled. It was to discuss the feasibility of this scheme, and to devise the best

¹ In possession of J. C. Holding, Esq.

method of carrying the matter to a successful issue, that Nelson and the Hamiltons were invited to Fonthill in December 1800. The suggestion was laid before the Marquis of Douglas (afterwards tenth Duke of Hamilton), Sir William's kinsman, on July 2nd, 1802, by Sir William, in a letter from which the following is taken : " If by my interest I cou'd induce Government to make me a Peer with the reversion to him at my decease, that he wou'd, in order to keep up the dignity of the Peerage, add during my life £2,000 per annum to the Pension the King has given me, and settle an annuity of £500 on Emma after my death, and that his two sure seats in Parliament shou'd be at the absolute disposal of the Minister, besides the great influence he possesses in two more seats in the House of Commons. You know me, and can well imagine that a Peerage wou'd not flatter my vanity ; but the offer'd increase of income wou'd certainly put me more at my ease than I am at present, and the £500 a year to Emma in addition to the £800 per annum I have left her by my will is also a consideration. Beckford sent here yesterday Mr. Pebles, his principal West Indian agent and one of his intended Members of Parliament, to hold a conversation with Lord Nelson and me, renewing the old offer, and wishing Lord Nelson to mention it to his friend Mr. Addington. His Lordship wou'd certainly do anything in his power to serve Lady H. and me, but sees as I do that unless I was supported by a stronger interest than that of my cousin Beckford's it might not succeed ; but that if the Duke of Hamilton and Marquis of Douglas

were to come forward on my behalf, that the business might succeed to my immediate advantage and satisfaction, and to that of Beckford's at my decease."

We have not space to quote the eminently sensible and diplomatic reply of the Marquis of Douglas to this letter of Sir William Hamilton's. It will suffice to say that the Beckford-Hamilton Peerage scheme was never floated.

Before the end of the year Lady Hamilton's personal funds were so low that Messrs. Coutts & Co. sent her a note to inform her that the balance of her money in their hands was only twelve shillings and elevenpence. This she left on her dressing-table for the purpose of meeting Sir William's observation, and he, rightly interpreting that her necessities were pressing, gave her an additional credit on Coutts for £130; but this extra strain upon his pension caused him to exclaim that the conduct of the Treasury in not refunding him any portion of his official losses was most shameful, and that, if he was not soon paid, he himself would apply to Mr. Addington. He was never paid! Government allowed him a retiring pension of £1,200 a year, to cease at his decease, thereby excluding the widow from benefit on that event.

After the Rev. William and Mrs. Nelson returned to Swaffham on the completion of the Welsh tour Mrs. Nelson wrote to Lady Hamilton. By the letter it will be seen that her daughter Charlotte was no child. She was of an age to take singing lessons from an Italian master, and, as can be seen, must have been pretty well advanced to be competent to take part

in duets with one so accomplished in vocal studies as was Lady Hamilton.

Would Mrs. Nelson have left her daughter in a house where slander could assail and taint that daughter's reputation as being a resident under the tarnished roof? Besides superintending the education of Miss Charlotte Nelson, Lady Hamilton extended her cares by the custody of Miss Anne Bolton, another niece of Lord Nelson. For six years Miss Charlotte Nelson lived with her. Mrs. William Nelson was not considered by Nelson a very brilliant writer, and he once remarked to Lady Hamilton that in the postscript of a letter her going to Swaffham was mentioned seven times; that although it made him laugh she was a good wife to his brother, else he would have been ruined long ago. Her letter to Lady Hamilton (undated) runs :—

" Sunday Evening.

"I received your kind letter this morning. It was morning church, and when I returned I found Miss S. Bolton here. She left me soon after dinner, but it was too late for me to write by this post. Mrs. Bolton is better, but not well enough to come here; but she hopes soon she shall. I perfectly agree with you, my dear friend, that much may be done with Charlotte this next year if she will but attend to all you tell her, and as I know she loves you I am sure she will. She seems to express herself in her last letter how glad she is that Vizanoni has returned. I hope you will have the goodness to let her learn duets with

you to sing after dinner, without music will sooner than anything make her get over that bashfulness she now has. What a comfort it is that you have got such a good cook. I hope Sir William will always have a dinner that he likes, which will make it a pleasure to you. As to my Lord, he is always pleased.

"It is a very pleasant thing to live with those who are so easily satisfied, but we are not all made with the same feelings; but this I believe, everybody may be almost what they like.

"I am glad you had such a pleasant excursion the other day. I am glad you left Charlotte at home with her masters; she is young enough to see sights when she has learnt everything. Mr. Addington, I see, has given away another Canterbury stall since we came here: he has sent Mr. Legg, Lord Dartmouth's brother, to Windsor to make room for another friend of his at Canterbury.¹ 'Put not your faith in Ministers, nor in any child of Man.' As this is Sunday night I may be allowed to quote Scripture.

"Young Mr. Anthony Ball, who was on board the *San Josef* at Plymouth and then left her, called here yesterday and said he wanted the D^r to recommend him to Lord Nelson to get on board an Indiaman as mate. He told him that he hardly knew what he was asking, and that after what had happened before he could not expect Lord Nelson would do anything for him if he could, and that he must be excused interfering; he thought he was very wrong to ask anything, as his brother, who is under Sir

¹ The Rev. John Barton, who died the following year,

James Saumaurez' protection through our family, might possibly want more assistance if he was paid off; it might be a hindrance to him. He said he was going to London this week, and would go to Merton and call on Lord Nelson, and wished me to mention it.

"Dr. Nelson joins me in every kind wish to all at Merton, and believe me," etc., etc.¹

Lord Nelson had in June 1802 arranged to allow £100 a year to his sister Mrs. Bolton for three years towards defraying the expenses of her children's education. As Nelson found so much difficulty in furthering the interests of his own relations—to all his representations Government turned a deaf ear—Lady Hamilton solicited the Hon. George Rose on behalf of Mr. Bolton, writing thus :—

"CLARGES STREET, *Novr 4th*, 1802.

"MY DEAR SIR,—You will excuse me writing to you on the Subject that I do, but my wish that Lord Nelson may be made happy, and his brother-in-law Mr. Bolton, placed in a situation that he would do justice to, makes me take the liberty of asking cou'd you not put in a good word for the place vacant now by Welbore Ellis's Death? I know your power and inclination, and your wish to oblige Lord Nelson, and really it would be only justice in Mr. Pitt to do something for the family of a man who is doing all he can for his country ; but this I know, Lord Nelson has the greatest reliance on your friendship for him,

¹ In possession of J. C. Holding, Esq.

which makes me take the liberty of now writing to you.

"I hope you will call on me when you come to town, and I promise not to bore you with my own Claims; for if those that have power will not do me justice I must be quiet, and in revenge to them I can say if ever I am minister's wife again with the power I had then, why, I will again do the same for my Country as I did then, and I did more than any *Ambassador* ever did before, tho' their pockets were filled with secret service money and poor Sir William and myself never got even a pat on the back; but indeed the cold-hearted Grenville was in there, I know. If I cou'd tell my story to Mr. Pitt he wou'd do me justice. I never am to be so happy as to be in company with that great man. I call him the Nelson of Ministers. But I will not tire you with my *sad* story. I shall be content to see Mr. Bolton placed, for that will make a worthy family happy, and render Nelson Mr. Pitt's and your grateful friend for ever.

"Believe me, with more than I can express of gratitude,

"EMMA HAMILTON."¹

A noble sentiment of revenge, to repay evil with good. Poor Emma Hamilton, wronged yet forgiving!

Our indignation is provoked when we remember the splendid daring and courage of Nelson in some of our grandest and most memorable sea fights, during a

¹ In possession of Frederick Barker, Esq.

period of great national danger, and then realise how powerless this great naval commander found himself to attract the serious notice of the Government on behalf of either relatives, friends, or even himself. His pecuniary rewards for services were placed lower than those of Lord St. Vincent, or Lord Duncan. Nelson therefore prepared a statement of his property and income, which he laid before Mr. Addington in applying for an increase of pension, which to a man of generous instincts who had so many applicants for relief, was a matter of necessity.

LORD NELSON'S INCOME AND PROPERTY.

	£	s.	d.
My Exchequer Pension for the Nile	2,000	0	0
Navy Pension for loss of one arm and one eye	923	0	0
Half-pay as Vice-Admiral	465	0	0
Interest of £1,000—3 per Cents	30	0	0
	<u>£3,418</u>	0	0

OUTGOINGS OF LORD NELSON.

	£	s.	d.
To Lady Nelson	1,800	0	0
Interest of money owing	500	0	0
Pension to my brother's widow	200	0	0
To assisting in educating my Nephews ...	150	0	0
	<u>2,650</u>	0	0
Expenditure	2,650	0	0
Income	3,418	0	0
	<u>£768</u>	0	0
For Lord Nelson	£768	0	0

Therefore Lord Nelson is *free* of house rent, but has to pay charities necessary for his station in life, taxes, repairs, servants, and to live upon £768 per annum.

Nelson's Friendships

Property of Lord Nelson.

	£	s.	d.
Merton House, land, plate, and furniture ...	20,000	0	0
In 3 per Cents, £1,000 Stock.			

Debts.

	£	s.	d.
By mortgage on Merton to assist in the purchase	6,000	0	0
Fitting out for the Baltic and again for my command on the Coast in the Summer of 1801	4,000	0	0
	£10,000	0	0

Real property of Lord Nelson, £10,000.
In 3 per Cents, £1,000 Stock.

No increase of pension was granted, and as only a small share of prize money fell to Nelson for the Battles of the Nile and Copenhagen, he being then under a Commander-in-Chief who was entitled to much the larger share of such prizes, he was almost bound to go to sea to fight again. He could have comfortably retired on his half-pay, but there were so many dependent relatives that he felt he must enlarge his means.

Poor Nelson and his paltry remunerations! Surely his victories on water equalled those of Marlborough on land. The countrymen of these great leaders undervalued the services of the one, and overestimated those of the other.

For some months Sir William Hamilton had been growing more feeble, and in the March of 1803 those about him knew they would soon lose him. He lay

very ill at Merton Place, where Nelson tended him with womanly care, taking the night watches for what proved to be the old knight's last fortnight of life. Mrs. William Nelson also joined Lady Hamilton, to assist in the nursing, and to console her Ladyship under the great trouble that was nigh at hand.

As if with inspired foresight that his wife's and Lord Nelson's reputation might be assailed when he was no longer on earth to defend and express his thorough understanding of their situations, he, one fortnight before he closed his mortal career, most solemnly bequeathed to Lord Nelson his portrait of Lady Hamilton by Bone, copied from the painting by Mme. Le Brun. He and Lord Nelson had lived as brothers, feeling for each other the greatest attachment. "The copy of M^{me} Le Brun's picture of Emma in enamel by Bone I give to my dearest friend Lord Nelson, Duke of Bronte, a very small token of the great regard I have for his Lordship, the most virtuous, loyal, and truly brave character I ever met with. God bless him, and shame fall on all those who do not say Amen." A more solemn legacy it was impossible to bequeath, a shield and defence against the awful aspersions upon the reputations of Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton regarding the birth of a child named Emma, "born either *end of December 1803 or beginning of January 1804*," which statement unfortunately is placed in the new *Dictionary of National Biography*. Whose child it was will be told in due course, and there can only be general regret that the false statement has been admitted to a place in this standard

work. The authority for any such fixed statement should have been of the soundest. For the present it must be borne in mind that Sir William Hamilton lay dying at the *end of March*, and expired *on April 6th* with his head on Nelson's breast, and holding his wife's hand.

So Sir William Hamilton departed this life at Merton on April 6th, 1803. He made his will May 28th, 1801, which commenced with the instructions for the disposal of his remains. "First, to fulfil the promise I made to my excellent wife Catherine, Lady Hamilton, deceased, I desire my body may be deposited near hers in the family vault of the Barlows in Slebeck Church in the County of Pembroke, and that my funeral may be conducted in as private a manner as decency and propriety will admit," etc.

To Lady Hamilton he left £800 yearly, to be paid in four quarterly instalments, 25th of March, June, September, and December; no noble sum for the enemies of her Ladyship to bring forward as an ample annuity. It will rather be seen that a little ingenuity had contrived to bring in another legatee, and so reduce Lady Hamilton's income, for her legacy was burdened. "And it is my will and meaning and I do hereby declare that the said annuity or yearly rent charge of eight hundred pounds shall be received by my said wife as well in confidence that she will during her life provide for her mother, as also in full satisfaction and in bar of any right, title, or interest that she, my said wife, may have or claim into or out of my real estate," etc.

An annual payment to Mrs. Cadogan of £100 was left by Sir William, but only to take effect out of Lady Hamilton's £800, thereby reducing her income to £700. And Mrs. Cadogan lived by the kind help of one of the most dutiful daughters that history has on record. The link of affection existing between these two women of humble origin is an almost perfect example of filial and maternal devotion. That Sir William Hamilton could have so crippled the generous creature who had sold her womanly vanities, her jewels, to set him up in respectable style just two and a half months before the drawing up of this will, can only lead us to form the opinion that the crafty Greville, who had so cruelly sacrificed Lady Hamilton to his own interest (and that to her own grief) in earlier days, had beguiled his uncle into bequeathing his property to the members of his own family, and to his own special advantage.

On March 31st, 1803, Sir William wrote the following codicil to his will, as he lay very ill at Merton :—

“Having heard that there need no more to make a codicil to a will and to make it valid than that the testator should write it in his own hand, and Sign on a part of the same will, I do then, feeling myself in a very weak state of health, wish, without making any alteration to my will, to explain a few points. When I made the above written will I had not purchased seven thousand pounds in the stocks, three per cents, and which are now in the hands of Mess^{rs} Coutts & Co., my bankers in the Strand. This stock and whatever money may be found in

Coutts' hands at my death I bequeath to the Right Honourable Charles F. Greville, my dear nephew and principal heir. He is well acquainted with all my affairs and will understand my meaning, and I dare say act up in every point to what he knows to be my wish. All my old pictures, according to a former agreement, and all I have under the denomination of *virtu*, all my drawings and papers to be given to my said nephew R^t Hon^{ble} Charles F. Greville; but observing in my will that at my death, by the will, my dear wife Emma would only receive three hundred pounds of the eight hundred I have left her and her mother as explained in the will, not now to leave my wife in such confusion at the moment of my death, my will is that my nephew Charles will pay my wife directly eight hundred pounds out of what I have in the stocks or Coutts' hands, and that her annual payments shall go on the same. And as I promised to pay Emma's debts, amounting to seven hundred pounds, but have only paid two hundred and fifty pounds, my will is that my nephew Charles Greville shall pay the remaining four hundred and fifty pounds from the arrears due to me from the Treasury as the King's Minister at Naples. The copy of M^{me} Le Brun's picture of Emma in enamel by Bone I give to my dearest friend Lord Nelson, Duke of Bronte, a very small token of the great regard I have for his Lordship, the most virtuous, loyal, and truly brave character I ever met with. God bless him, and shame fall on all those who do not say Amen. One little article more, and I have done. My noble friend and

relation the Marquis of Douglas and Clydesdale having often expressed a great liking to my famous Amati tenor, I bequeath to his Lordship the case as it is with the tenor and Giardini violin, and he may chuse out of my musick any that may suit him. This is also a very small mark of the regard I have for so valuable a friend and relation. All my firearms I likewise bequeath to my nephew Charles Greville, except two guns that are at Merton and which I bequeath to L^d Nelson.

“W^m HAMILTON (L.S.).

“MERTON, *March 31st*, 1803.”

The annuity of £800 left to Lady Hamilton by her husband was a marriage settlement, arranged when that ceremony took place in 1791, a similar settlement having been made by Sir William Hamilton upon his first wife, Miss Barlow, of Clarges Street. In the comparatively peaceful period when the first Lady Hamilton lived, Sir William, who had but small private means, was dealing handsomely in arranging that amount; but the sum dwindled into comparative nothingness when charity, entertainment, and hospitality had to be extended to the numerous acquaintances formed abroad under the misfortunes of war. On May 25th, 1804, Lord Nelson mentions this in a French letter he addressed to Sir John Acton soliciting that he will ask the Queen of Naples to mediate with Mr. Addington. He says:—

“Le Chevalier [Hamilton], lors de son mariage, lui assigna 800 livres sterling par an, et comme il

avait destiné exactement la même somme à sa première femme l'an 1752, il croyait avoir agi avec beaucoup de libéralité. Mais les temps ont fort changé, que 800 livres sterling ne suffisent plus pour une dame dans la position de veuve du Chevalier Hamilton, et ne donnent guères de quoi acheter du pain et du fromage. M. Addington est, je le sais, très bien intentionné envers Milady, mais les frais de la guerre et probablement le manque de quelqu'un qui pousse l'affaire



LADY HAMILTON'S VISITING CARD.

le rendent un peu difficile quand il s'agit d'accorder une pension, quoi qu'il doit avouer avec tout le monde que cette pension est due et a été bien méritée."

£200 has been mentioned as her dress allowance, because in one letter she wrote that sum was little enough for dress and charity ; but her actual dower was £800.

Lord Nelson has erred in the date of Captain Hamilton's marriage to Miss Barlow, which took place in 1758. The money referred to would be settled upon her when he became Ambassador.

Describing the death scene at Sir William's bedside Captain Mahan in his *Life of Nelson* remarks : " The grouping of figures and emotions at that deathbed was odd almost beyond comprehension, one of the most singular studies which human nature has presented to itself of its powers of self-cajolement. A man systematically deceived, yet apparently sincerely regarded and affectionately tended to the last by his betrayers, one of whom at least prided himself, and for the most part not unjustly, upon his fidelity to his friends. Hamilton alone, among the three, seems to have been single-minded—to have viewed their mutual relations to the end, not with cynical indifference, but with a simplicity of confidence hard to be understood in a man of his antecedents. It may have been, however, that he recognised the inevitable in the disparity of years and in his wife's early training, and that he chose to cover her failings with a self-abnegation that was not without nobility."

Do not the letters of Sir William Hamilton to Lord Grenville indisputably show that his love and admiration for Nelson surpassed that of Lady Hamilton for Sir Horatio? At that earlier period the eminent capabilities of Lady Hamilton were equally at the service of any portion of the British fleet. Sir William Hamilton discerned the abilities of Nelson, and gloried in his achievements ; he alone was responsible for attaching Lord Nelson to the Embassy, and sincerely rejoiced in the great victories he gained. The " simplicity of confidence hard to be understood "

was the apparent truth that confidence prevailed because there was nothing to misunderstand.

In due course will be shown strange discrepancies in the statements which form the foundation of these slanders. It is sad indeed that the painful necessity to defend Nelson's moral reputation has arisen, but when a noble reputation has been wantonly outraged it is but right to show forth that which the search-light of investigation has revealed, and in such a case self becomes a secondary consideration.

With his dying breath Sir William turned to Lady Hamilton and said : " You have never in thought, word, or deed offended me, and let me thank you again and again for your affectionate kindness to me all the time of our ten years' union."

As soon as the death had taken place Lord Nelson considered that he could no longer remain in the house, so he asked Mrs. William Nelson to take apartments for him, and he delicately begged her to represent to Lady Hamilton, that now his friend was dead, it would not be right for him to remain an inmate where her home was, for it was a bad world, and her grief for the loss of her husband might not let her think of the impropriety of his remaining there. When the obsequies were over she returned to her London house, and from there went on a round of visits to Lord Nelson's relations in Norfolk. Thus she could not have been in his company more than four or five weeks at most, and certainly not under his roof. He departed for the Mediterranean on May 18th, 1803, Lady

Hamilton then being in Norfolk. After more than two years' absence Lord Nelson returned to England on August 19th, 1805, remaining at Merton only three weeks and four days; departing then for the glorious sea-fight at Trafalgar that covered England with renown, and cost many a loved and precious life.

It is plainly shown that the only time that Lord Nelson personally entertained Lady Hamilton at Merton after her husband's death, was for three weeks and four days, and then in company of some of his own near relatives.

It had been arranged for some time before the marriage of Sir William Hamilton to his second wife, that, failing heirs direct, the property should be inherited by his nephew the Hon. Charles Fulke Greville, who therefore in his own interest as prospective possessor had looked well after the estate of Sir William at Milford Haven.

As we have seen, her husband bequeathed only £800 a year to Lady Hamilton, feeling so sure that a portion of his own pension would be awarded to her, seeing that he had enjoyed it for so short a time. The following letter from a brother of the late Sir William¹ to Charles Greville is of interest, showing that there was kindly feeling entertained towards Lady Hamilton by the family :—

" RICHMOND, *Friday evening*, 8 O'Clock,
" *April* 8, 1803.

" MY DEAR SIR,—By some mistake your letter dated the 7th did not come to my hands till seven

¹ The Rev. Frederick Hamilton.

O'Clock this evening. I believe Sir William Hamilton was 72 complete, but as I do not know the month of his birth he may have been only in his 72nd year. I hope you will give me credit when I assure you that I am happy in the destination my Brother has made of his property; my satisfaction wou'd have been more complete if it wou'd have permitted him to have added something to Lady Hamilton's provision. I remain with great regard, my dear Sir, your faithful and affectionate humble servant,

"FREDERICK HAMILTON."

The body of Sir William Hamilton was taken to Milford Haven for interment. It will be seen by what Lord Nelson wrote to Sir J. C. Hippisley, Bart., at the time, how much he deplored the death of his companion and friend:—

"*April 17th, 1803.*

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am obliged by your kind invitation for next Thursday at the Literary Society. Had our dear Sir William been here I should have dined at the Meeting with real pleasure, but as I am circumstanced by that irreparable loss I can only return you my sincere thanks and to assure you that I feel myself your much obliged humble servant,

"NELSON AND BRONTE.

"Dear Sir William will be buried next Thursday in Wales."

Nelson having occasion to write to the Queen of Naples, mentioned the death of Sir William, and the

fact that he had left Lady Hamilton but ill provided for to keep up any position such as that of ex-Ambadress. Her Majesty availed herself of one of the somewhat rare opportunities of communicating with England to convey her sympathies to the bereaved lady.

"26 *Juillet*, 1803

"MA CHÈRE MILADY,—Je profite de l'occasion du depart de M. Accud pour vous écrire. Les occasions de communique avec Angleterre sont actuellement si difficiles qu'il faut profiter avec empressement quand on ne trouve une. C'est ce que je fais vous assurer de mes costants invariables sentimens pour votre persone. J'ai appris avec bien de l'interêt et de la peine la perte que vous avez faites de l'honête et bon chevalier ; ce que surtout m'a fait bien de la peine c'est la façon peu avantageuse comme il vous a laisse établis. Cella me peine réellement, prenant toujours le plus vif interêt à tout ce que vous concerne. Nous nous resouvenons tous avec reconnoissance de toutes les attentions que vous nous avez temoigne et ne desirons que vous en temoigner notre gratitude. Le comandement done au Brave et vertueux Milord Nelson dans la Mediteranée nous a tous comblé de joie, et nous en sentons déjà les heureux effets. Adieu, ma chère Milady. Donnez-moi quelquefois de vos nouvelles, et croyez moi pour la vie votre reconnoissant amie,

"CHARLOTTE."

Her Majesty used the name Charlotte as signature when she wrote in French, and Caroline when she wrote in Italian.

The allusion to Lord Nelson's presence in the Mediterranean refers to his having been appointed Commander-in-Chief of his Majesty's ships employed in the Mediterranean. Nelson had hoisted his flag on the *Victory* on the afternoon of May 18th, 1803. This course was taken by him of necessity, in consequence of the non-increase of his pension in response to his appeal, his numerous charities overwhelming his income.

The family of Sir William Hamilton showed Lady Hamilton the most courteous attention, and did their best to obtain a pension for her after the death of her husband. Lord Melville, to whom the Marquis of Douglas, (afterwards Duke of Hamilton,) had written on her behalf, replied saying he had had a talk with Mr. Addington, who was quite inclined to favour it, and that he, (Lord Melville,) intended soon to call on Lady Hamilton. The letter of the Marquis to her shows that she was in deep trouble at the loss of her husband.

"In the course of the day I am in hopes of being able to call and inquire after you. I shall hope to find that necessity will have begun to work upon your mind and that you will feel that whatever are the misfortunes under which we labour, patience and resignation are the only proper, only efficacious remedies. I will not preach, because I feel myself inadequate to it. My own love and affection for our much lamented friend far supersedes any sensations that philosophy and reflection can possibly suggest, and in uniting a sigh with yours I only bestow

what my heart acknowledges and my every thought approves.

"Believe me with regard, dear Lady Hamilton,

"Your affectionate friend and relative,

"DOUGLAS AND CLYDESDALE.

"April 19, 1803."

The head of the great house of Hamilton did not consider Lady Hamilton a disgrace to the family, any more than the former Duchess of Hamilton and Argyle, who when at Naples saw and admired her, and advised Sir William Hamilton to marry her, the Marquis of Abercorn witnessing the wedding ceremony.

Mr. Charles Greville having inherited the late Sir William's house in Piccadilly, Mrs. Cadogan remained to superintend the division of effects, while her widowed daughter visited for change among Lord Nelson's relatives in Norfolk. Mr. Greville took many of Sir William's pictures, including a portrait of Lady Hamilton by Angelica Kaufmann. He did not know the address of Lady Hamilton until he saw Mrs. Cadogan, when he went to inspect the house in Piccadilly in June 1803. In writing to her Ladyship he regretted the amount of her bills, and the impossibility of all being paid. This was but one month after Sir William's death; even the debts incurred during his lifetime were thrown upon her. A bitter time for her with such anxieties, and the sight of the treasures accumulated by her husband passing away from her! She took a house—No. 11, Clarges Street, Piccadilly—and thither the furniture,

linen, and silver purchased by the sacrifice of her jewellery were removed.

She was at Hilborough when Lord Nelson left London for the Mediterranean on May 18th, 1803. On reaching Portsmouth at noon (he had left London at four in the morning) he wrote to Lady Hamilton to acquaint her with his arrival at the port. Pettigrew has copied the letter into his *Life of Nelson*, but he has omitted one sentence of it. The original letter is in possession of J. C. Holding, Esq., of Southsea.

The sentence referred to is : "I hope your marriage is gone off well, for the girl may thank you (if it is worth thanking), for her husband." Pettigrew must have thought it was connected with the mysterious Mrs. Thomson, but it was not so.

The wedding was that of Captain Sir William Bolton to his cousin Miss Catherine Bolton, which took place on May 18th, 1803. The friendliness of Lord Nelson's family to Lady Hamilton is always apparent. She remained with them to the end of June, and then returned to her house in Clarges Street, London. All she had out of which to pay rent, and retain her place in society, as the widow of a great Ambassador, with a large circle of acquaintances, was £800 a year. As this was in no way adequate for her to maintain her position, Lord Nelson, as a reproach to the Ministry, allowed her out of his own purse the same amount as the pension of Sir W. Hamilton, which he had only enjoyed two years, and which ceased with his death.

The eminently charitable nature of Lady Hamilton would have been sadly crippled with such a reduced income, and her own immediate relatives and those of Lord Nelson himself benefited greatly by this handsome allowance. Most of the year 1804, Lady Hamilton spent at Clarges Street, and sometimes entertained the sisters and brother of Lord Nelson and their children at Merton, acting as hostess during the Admiral's absence in the Mediterranean; and truly happy they all were, to the satisfaction of the generous provider of their pleasure.

In October 1804 Lady Hamilton was again with the relatives in Norfolk, and none can say that they were light-minded frivolous persons; they were quiet, extremely respectable, and good living; the worthy descendants and connections of the pious Rev. Edmund Nelson. After this trip Lord Nelson wrote to Lady Hamilton: "I am glad that you have had so pleasant a trip into Norfolk. That you have made them all happy I have no doubt, but you have made yourself poor. I do not believe that Pitt will give you a pension, any more than Addington, who I supported to the last moment of his Ministry. There is no gratitude in any of them; however, if they do not do it I will give it you out of Bronte." Which latter remark upsets Pettigrew as regards the will of February 5th, 1801. Bronte was yet to will!

Lady Hamilton's much talked of extravagance was but the outcome of kindness and of her desire to make the struggle of life easier to those who felt its burdens.

Early in the year, when Nelson first designed to return to sea life, his old Captains applied to sail with him, to one of whom, Captain William Bedford, 76, Great Pulteney Street, Bath, he wrote, January 23rd, 1803, from 23, Piccadilly, in answer to his application :—

“MY DEAR BEDFORD,¹—Many thanks for your kind letter only this moment received. I can assure you that there is not that man in the Service who loves and respects you more than myself. I am sorry to hear that you are not quite so well as could be wished ; that being the case, however much your inclination may lead you to wish employment, yet I would not advise you to apply for it till you are perfectly recovered, for otherwise in a new War you will be done up before it's half over, and I hope to see you very near me in some day of Battle, and with such as yourself I shall have no fears for a more complete Victory than ever was obtained ; but I think we shall keep peace as long as we can. When you travel to London you know how happy we shall be to see you, for believe me with the truest attachment yours most faithfully,

“NELSON AND BRONTE.”

The greatest friendship existed between Nelson and his officers, who fully appreciated the thoroughness of their chief and ably assisted in the perfecting of his schemes.

¹ In possession of J. C. Holding, Esq.

The story of Nelson's sea life has been so often and so well told, that it is only proposed to introduce incidental matter that may have escaped other writers, such as the following letter, written January 13th, 1804, to Sir Thomas Trigge, K.B. :—¹

"I feel very much obliged by your kind present of papers, which you so courteously have the goodness to send me. I am glad that the little arrangement which I have been able to make for your Comfort in the *Garri^m* is so satisfactory; it is in vain, my dear Sir Thomas, to try and please everybody.

"Some Merchants who have lost their Ships do not approve of the way the Brigs are stationed, but have recommended to the Admiralty that one should lay in Tangiers and the other in Jesemy Bay. If that was done I venture to say nothing could get into the Garrison for Tariff, Calrita, Tariffa [?], and Ceuta; but these gentlemen do not care if the Garrison lived upon Salt Beef. I am always sorry when I hear of a Capture, but my mind feels easy that none of the Captures are owing to any inattention of mine. The Ad^{my} keep me much barer of small craft than Lord S^t V^t was kept, that I have never one with me; for from Nov. 24th, when the *Excellent* joined, till I sent the *Phæbe* down in the end of Dec^r, I had no means of answering a letter. I have 6 Frigates and Sloops to watch the French Army in the heel of Italy, to save the Morea, which the Turks are in much fear about. Sir Alex. Ball calls loudly upon me for protection to their trade and provisions. I have 4

¹ In possession of J. C Holding, Esq

for that Service. I am obliged to keep a Sloop or two between Bonafacio and Sardinia to prevent the invasion of 8,000 men from Corsica ; and yet the King of Sardinia and the Turks are at peace, if such a situation can be called Peace. You are easier contented than any of the others, and you may rest assured that in no way is the Garrison of Gib^r out of my mind.

“ I intended keeping the *Childers* till our business with Algiers was finished, but the Wind is so contrary for Algiers that it is in vain to keep my letters longer on hand. I have dispatched the Cutter to get a clean Bottom at Gibraltar, but she is a dull Sailer ; the Gib^r Mail of course she will take to England. I am very much pleased with our friend Gore's disposal of the French Privateer.

“ I am ever, with the greatest Respect, my dear Sir Thomas, your most obliged Servant,

“ NELSON AND BRONTE.”

About this time Nelson had a lawsuit against Earl St. Vincent relative to prize money, to recover £13,000 which had been awarded to the Earl, who had returned to England at the time the prizes were taken (October 1799), and the command of the fleet thus devolving upon Nelson, he considered himself entitled to the whole of the above sum. Verdict was given for Lord Nelson.

The following Nelson letters are eminently characteristic.

FROM LORD NELSON TO SIR JOSEPH BANKS.¹

"Amphion, OFF TOULON, July 9th, 1803.

"MY DEAR SIR JOSEPH,—One of our Frigates has taken a French Corvette which has been at Athens and brought from thence some cases of I know not what, but I suppose things as choice as Lord Elgin's. I have, however, directed that these cases should not be opened, but sent to England as they are, that if the Public wish to purchase them that Government should have the option. As they are the property of the lowest seamen they cannot be presented, or I should have been truly happy to have had it in my power to give them to the Royal Society or Academy of Arts. I have directed them to you, hoping that you will take the trouble that Government may know the value of them, and if they chuse to buy them, pay the money to the agent, and if they do not think them worthy of their attention I must content myself with my kind thoughts towards my country and direct the agent to sell them. Although I do not think that these works (I suppose of architecture) are in your line of pursuits, yet by addressing myself to you I have given myself a great pleasure in enquiring after your health and of assuring you under my hand of my sincere respect and esteem, and that I am in the fullest meaning of the words, my Dear Sir Joseph, your most obliged and faithful

"NELSON AND BRONTE."

¹ In possession of J. C. Holding, Esq., Southsea.

FROM LORD NELSON TO SIR JOSEPH BANKS.¹

(This letter is a sequel to the foregoing one.)

"July 9th, 1803, OFF TOULON.

"MY DEAR SIR JOSEPH,—This moment a Vessel has joined and brought the enclosed to the Captain of the *Maidstone*. I send it as it is from a *Seaman*, therefore I bar criticism. I wish the cases never had been opened, but I cannot now help it. The Jar, I suppose, is a fine one. Ever, my Dear Sir Joseph,

"Your obliged Servant,

"NELSON AND BRONTE."

FROM LORD NELSON² TO SIR RICHARD
BICKERTON, BART.

"Victory, BETWEEN IVICA AND MINORCA,

"Jan. 15th, 1804.

"MY DEAR SIR RICHARD,—Your letter of Dec. 21st off Cape Carbonaize I receiv'd by the *Childers* on the 9th. You will have known if the transport arrived from Madalena, that I put in there, finding it impossible at this season of the year to clear them at sea. The situation of Sard^a I consider as so dangerous that I left the *Amazon* at Madalena to assist in the defence of the place untill she is released by the *Cameleon* from Naples, whose quicker movements by means of Oars may more injure the Enemy thnn a larger force in the frigate.

¹ In possession of J. C. Holding, Esq., Southsea.

² In possession of Frederick Barker, Esq.

"I got on the rendezvous on the 9th, and found all my stray flock except *Termagant* and y^e transport, who, I have since heard, is gone to Malta, being *short of bread*, which has surprised me. The transport I hear is at St. Pierre's. *Narcissus* looked into Toulon the 5th ;



SIR THOMAS PASLEY, BART.

there were nine sail of the line ready. I left *Narcissus* and *Active* to watch them. Keats is gone to Algiers to see what is to be done with that Dey, and knowing the exact state of the French fleet I thought I could not do better in the midst of Keats' mission just to make my appearance in the Bay of Algiers. Southerly winds have drove me here, and the Wind still continues

due South ; when I am going back it will be due North. The Cutter brought me the Orders given to the *Monmouth* and *Agincourt*, most secret—I hope they are executed—to go to Trieste for some arms ; and they put into Malta on their return to land any arms. You will know from their orders how to dispose of them in the Ships going home with the Convoy ; for which reason if they are soon executed, I mean in a week, the Convoy had better wait. I send the *Niger* with the Malta Mails, the Cutter sailing so heavy that she was obliged to be towed, and with a sprung mast I sent her to be refitted and cleaned at Gib^r, and my dispatches are gone down in the *Childers*. The *Niger* wants some refit and to be freed from *Rats*, as you will see by her orders.

“Now what will Sir Alex^r Ball say to me ? He has sent me a packet to send to Egypt. From the Fleet I have nothing to send, and therefore it returns to him again. The Schooner or *Spider* can carry it, and her destination can be secret by giving her sealed orders not to be opened till her arrival at such a place. What can I do ? I have not ships ; the Admiralty give me none, yet they think I have too many stationed to the eastward of Sicily, and that more should be placed at the Straights Mouth. Sir Alex^r wants a Convoy to Odessa. In the first place, *no* Ships of War can enter as a Convoy into the Black Sea, but when the Convoy arrives from England or when ships are bound up the Levant, if he will order his Vessels to be ready, the Ship who carries the Smyrna trade can see the Convoy into the Dardanelles, and if the time

is pointed out when they are sure of being returned, a Convoy shall be there for them ; but on consultation *fix the time*, and the English trade and Malta trade must accommodate each other.

"I shall finish when I have communicated with Keats."

A few pages back it was stated that a slander dating from the time when Sir William Hamilton lay dying, would be under discussion later, and the period for its introduction is now arrived at. Earnest attention to the argument is solicited.

Sir William died on April 6th, 1803, as we have seen.

All that had been Sir William Hamilton's became at his death the property of his nephew the Hon. Charles Greville, who with scant courtesy allowed his aunt by marriage but one month in which to remove such of the household effects from the house in Piccadilly as she had a legal right to. She rented a small house close by—No. 11, Clarges Street. Her Ladyship then went on a visit to the Rev. William Bolton of Hilborough, Norfolk, and to Southend and other places ; after which it had been arranged by Lord Nelson, before he went to sea, that she should act for him as lady housekeeper at Merton, aided by her capable mother, during what seemed to promise and actually became lengthened absence from England.

It was not until Lord Nelson had left England that Lady Hamilton took up her residence at Merton. It was in June 1803, at which time the Admiral was on board the *Amphion* in the Bay of Gibraltar. There

was nothing extraordinary in this arrangement—the house had to be kept up, and who was better qualified to look after its superintendence than the widowed lady who had conducted it when she resided there during the lifetime of her husband? What greater harm was there in Lady Hamilton, a widow lady in comparatively reduced circumstances for the requirements of her position, keeping house for an absent gentleman, an old and tried friend, than there would have been in any other lady occupying the same position under the like circumstances?

While at Merton during the absence of Lord Nelson Lady Hamilton often entertained his relatives there on a visit, and frequently went to them, great and unbroken friendship existing.

When Sir Harris Nicolas compiled his *Letters and Dispatches of Lord Nelson* he copied many letters of which he did not see the originals, but which had appeared in an anonymous work in 1814. He openly questioned the authenticity of some, while he inserted others with omissions; for he detected that certain of these letters were at variance, and in different styles, and therefore could not all be true emanations from Lord Nelson.

At the end of March 1804, the *Thisbe* had brought letters from England as far as Gibraltar, which were then taken on by the *Phæbe* to Nelson at Madalena. Two letters appear in *Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton*, (the anonymous work, 1814,) in answer to letters brought by the *Thisbe*. In one is the sole mention of a child called "little Emma," the parentage

of which child Nelson biographers have evidently been greatly exercised about. It must be noted that the replies to the letters written by Lady Hamilton and carried by the *Thisbe* differ as to dates—one being dated April 2nd, and the other April 10th; also that the letter written on April 2nd is said to be in reply to letters written by Lady Hamilton in December or early in January, while in the undoubted Nelson letter written on April 10th the Admiral says, "I have received all your truly kind and affectionate letters to January 25th by the *Thisbe*." This one mention of "little Emma" has made the child's name famous, for it has obtained for her name a place in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, where it is recorded that she was born to Lady Hamilton either at the end of December 1803 or the beginning of January 1804. This assertion is made in the face of the absence of any show of anxiety on the part of Lord Nelson, and with full knowledge of the difference in the contents of the two letters, which it is all too evident Nicolas detected, and in place of showing up his discovery omitted the discrepancy and represented it with dots. Pettigrew, not being so keen, copied the letter April 10th in full, and thus they stand:—

" April 2, 1804.

[*Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton* (1814)—doubtful authority.]

"I have, my dearest beloved Emma, been so uneasy for this last month, desiring most earnestly to hear of your well-doing. Captain Capel brought me your

letters sent by the *Thisbe* from Gibraltar. I opened—opened—found none but December or early in January. I was in such an agitation. At last I found one without a date, which, thank God, told my poor heart you was recovering, but that dear little Emma was no more, and that Horatia had been so very ill—it altogether upset me. But it was just at bedtime, and I had time to reflect and be thankful to God for sparing you and our dear Horatia. I am sure the loss of one, much more both, would have drove me mad. I was so agitated as it was that I was glad it was night and that I could be by myself.”

This extract contains *the sole mention of little Emma.*

Pettigrew, not noticing that the letter of April 10th differs from that of April 2nd as to the dates of letters received, inserts in full.

Sir Harris Nicolas seeing the April 10th letter disagrees with that of April 2nd omits the opening sentence.

“April 10, 1804.

“April 10, 1804.

“MY DEAREST EMMA,—I have received all your truly kind and affectionate letters to January 25th by the *Thisbe*, and last night your letter of January 13 by Naples. The armorins will go under the

“MY DEAREST EMMA,— The armorins¹ will go under the care of Captain Layman, who unfortunately lost his Sloop, but with much credit to himself; he has been acquitted of all blame. I rejoice that dear Horatia

¹ The armorins (according to Mr. Falconet, who purchased them for Lord Nelson) were dresses sent in lengths of 12 canes, or equal to 26 yards of English measure.

care of Captain Layman, who unfortunately lost his Sloop, but with much credit to himself; he has been acquitted of all blame. I rejoice that dear Horatia is got well, and also that you are recovered from your severe indisposition. In our situation with Spain this letter probably may never reach you," etc., etc.

is got well, and also that you, my dearest Emma, are recovered from your severe indisposition. In our present situation with Spain this letter probably will never reach you. I have wrote fully and intend to send them by the *Argus*, who I expect to join every minute. Elfi Bey I hear has had all his fine things taken from him. He escaped into the Desert and is pursued; probably his head is off long before this time," etc., etc.

Sir Harris Nicolas gives a postscript to this letter : "I am glad to hear that you are going to take my dear Horatia, to educate her. She must turn out an angel if she minds what you say to her; and Eliza and Ann¹ will never forget your goodness. My health is *so-so*; I shall get through the summer, and in the winter shall go home. You will readily imagine all I would say, and do think. My kind love to all friends."

As far back as February 10th, 1804, Nelson wrote to Lady Hamilton: "We were blown in here on the 8th in the heaviest gale of wind and snowstorm that I almost ever felt, but all your letters to Dec. 27 I found just arrived." We see by this that he had

¹ His nieces, the Misses Bolton.

received her December letters on February 10th. Late in March—no date—he writes : “I received last night your two letters of January 15th and 28th.”¹

If Lady Hamilton was confined late in December or early in January, and Nelson received and acknowledged letters from her in March, dated January 15th and 28th, saying that she was quite well, would he write on April 2nd and confess to the anxiety with which he had just opened her letters of December and early in January?

Later, in a letter dated June 27th, 1804, Nelson wrote : “You must not complain of my not writing, for I never miss an opportunity, as the following list will shew: February 25th, by Barcelona; March 2nd, 15th, by Rosas; 19th, by Gibraltar; April 10th, by Rosas; 14th, by Captain Layman,” and so he goes on. No April 2nd.

No “little Emma” is mentioned in the letter of April 10th or any other, nor is the writer seriously disturbed in authentic correspondence.

It is to be regretted that the reputation of Lord Nelson should be impeached on such slight evidence.

In making research over this case the registers at Merton were examined. There is no entry of any Emma born or dead for the years mentioned—1803 or 1804. The search, however, revealed an item of interest under baptisms:—

“1802.

“*Hamilton*--Fatima, Emma, Charlotte, Nelson, from

¹ Morrison MSS.

Egypt, a Negress about Twenty years of age under the protection of the Right Honourable Lady Hamilton, was baptised April 26th, 1802."

This girl was a Copt whom Lord Nelson presented to Lady Hamilton when he arrived at Naples after the Battle of the Nile. The evidence in the register at Merton tends to show that it was a common practice with them to bestow their own names upon those whom they patronised. The girl's own name was Fatima, but the others which appear in the entry are those of the Hamilton or Nelson families; yet she was in no way a relative. The chief item of interest, however, lies in the day upon which the baptism took place. April 26th was the anniversary of Lady Hamilton's natal day, and the woman who celebrated her birthday by the admission to Christianity of her black slave had *some* good in her!

It is painful to those who have made serious studies of the lives of Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton to note the eagerness with which whatever is detrimental to either is circulated and accepted. There is much that was good in the lives of both that has been withheld, and practical Christianity teaches us that it is better to raise a reputation than defame it.

Nelson may have exceeded legitimate admiration for Lady Hamilton, but when we remember how he craved for kindness and sympathy, which his wife denied him, and how Lady Hamilton understood and indeed inspired his noble nature, it may readily be perceived that his own generous disposition would

cause him to show and express the gratitude that was his natural response to her kindness of heart.¹ On December 24th, 1803, Lady Hamilton wrote to Sir William Scott urging a pension. Could she have done so at that date with a catastrophe at hand that would be fatal to her honour? for her good husband Sir William Hamilton had died on April 6th, 1803—died with his head on Nelson's breast, and holding his wife's hand, trusting in both.

The first Nelsonian writers placed too ready credence in documents which were absolutely unauthenticated, and made reckless assertions which modern biographers have carelessly copied and enforced. The task of undoing the mischief is most difficult, but conscientious and patient research shows it can be done, and all things will come right in time.

As if to confront the slanderous inference contained in the letter dated April 2nd, 1804, there is one extant dated four days later, written to Mrs. Bolton by her sister-in-law Mrs. William Nelson; and we can have no better evidence of the high esteem in which Lady Hamilton was held by the whole Nelson family, who decidedly blamed Lady Nelson for the

¹ In 1804 Hayley was engaged in writing the Life of his intimate friend Romney. He wrote to ask Lady Hamilton to furnish a list of the pictures Romney had painted of her, with their dates, so that he could insert them in his work, adding: "You were not only his model, but his inspirer; and he truly and gratefully said that he owed a great part of his felicity as a painter to the angelic kindness and intelligence with which you used to animate his diffident and tremulous spirits to the grandest efforts of art."

Nelson was not the only genius, evidently, whom Lady Hamilton inspired, by her sympathy, to noble effort.

unhappiness which had made it needful for their brother to separate from his wife.

"CANTERBURY, *April 6, 1804.*¹

"MY DEAR MRS. BOLTON,—I was very glad to hear that Lady Bolton² was safe in Bed. I hope with your good nursing she will soon get her strength again. My dear Horatio has been with us just a week; he told me that Mrs. Matcham and my Lady would come and make us a visit if we could receive them. My answer was, after Thursday I should be most happy to see them all here. Mr. Matcham wrote us word the party would be with us the end of this week and he should accompany them; this post I received a letter from Charlotte to say my Lady thought it was not worth while to come, as Mrs. Matcham said she could not stay above one day. It is a pity it was said at all, for now I am very much disappointed.

"I will own to you that I think I can make this place much pleasanter to my Lady when we get warmer weather and the days are longer, as then we can drive about of a morning and come home to dinner."

The "little Emma" of the letter bearing date April 2nd, 1804, may be regarded as an untraceable myth. Lord Nelson, according to an entry he made of dates of letters written to Lady Hamilton, has none for April 2nd. The veritable "little Emma" of whom he *did* write about this time, lived. She was the daughter of Sir William and Lady Bolton, the

¹ In possession of J. C. Holding, Esq.

² Mrs. Bolton's daughter, married to her cousin Sir William Bolton, R.N.

latter a niece of Lord Nelson's. The anticipated birth was overdue. When his Lordship wrote to Lady Hamilton in March 1804, he made use of the sentence upon which a false interpretation no doubt has been put, and led to the statement in the *Dictionary of National Biography* about "little Emma": "Kiss dear Horatia for me and the other. Call him what you please—if a girl, Emma."

"The other" means Lady Bolton's expected child; and as Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton were to stand sponsors the reference following regards the naming of it in accordance with its sex. When it was born it was named Emma Horatia. Lady Bolton's mother had written to Lady Hamilton how weary her daughter was on account of its non-advent. Lord Nelson presented the child with a piece of plate value £50; and at teething time Lady Hamilton gratified the mother by sending it a beautiful coral. It will be remembered that Sir William and Lady Bolton were married on March 18th, 1803, the day Lord Nelson departed for command in the Mediterranean.

Lady Bolton was devotedly attached to her "little Emma," and the child's progress or infantine sufferings were all retailed to Lady Hamilton, who would be sure to sympathise. Yet wanton crime has been the measure accorded to her for her interest and kindness to this infant.

About the same time her Ladyship and Lord Nelson conjointly stood godparents to the infant of Colonel Suckling, and the Admiral made it a christening gift of plate value thirty guineas. Being absent, he

deputed Lady Hamilton to make the selection on his behalf.

What more proof is required that the Nelson family perfectly understood her situation in Nelson's household?

Short extracts from Mrs. W. Nelson's correspondence will show that Lady Hamilton's time was much given to the supervision of the studies of Miss Charlotte Nelson, and Mrs. W. Nelson gratefully acknowledges in a letter to her "dear Friend" the kind nursing bestowed upon her son Horatio by Lady Hamilton. He was an Eton schoolboy, and when taken ill there she had him brought to Merton, where she personally tended him until he was restored to health. To afford pleasure or soothe pain she was ever on active service. The Lady Hamilton so much belied infused much happiness into many lives. Again, Mrs. Nelson says: "I am very much pleased with Charlotte's French letter. My Brother says it was very well done; it's all owing *to your kind attention* to her that she does so well, for she never wrote me a French letter from school. . . . I long for the time to see you and my dear children. I wish to God we did not live so many miles from each other. . . . My Dear Boy will now, I hope, soon be well. What is your opinion of his going back to school? It is not *long*, I should think, to his holidays. I think his health is of more consequence than his Book, and he can learn French with his sister. Charlotte is very good to attend so much to her Music." Seeing how the education of these young people succeeded under the supervision of Lady Hamilton, whose household also included

Miss Anne Bolton, another young niece of Nelson's, he asked her to remove Horatia to Merton, to which she at once consented, and that is how the child came to reside there in truly faithful custody.

In the early part of the year 1804 a very interesting letter was written by Mr. John Scott, Nelson's secretary, to Mr. Marsh, Nelson's banker. Mr. Marsh had obtained for him the situation on board the *Victory*.

"*Victory* AT SEA, 24th February, 1804.¹

"DEAR SIR,—With infinite pleasure I received your Letter of the 14th December last by Mr. Ford, and feel truly gratified by the sentiments Lord Nelson has so much like himself expressed of my Conduct, which laying self out of the question would have been exerted to the utmost of my power in justice to your kind and friendly recommendation. It would have been paying little respect to what I so much value to have considered myself satisfied with the honour of being attached to His Lordship without exerting every means of making myself useful. Nothing can be more pleasing than the approbation of an honourable man ; particularly of so great a character as Lord Nelson, whose political, able, and ready decision astonished me beyond measure. Indeed, all his public business is transacted with a degree of correctness peculiar to himself, nor does the most trifling circumstance escape his penetrating *Eye*. From a knowledge of his private and secret correspondence I am led to consider him the greatest character I ever met with—in fact, he

¹ In possession of the Misses Marsh-Caldwell, granddaughters to the banker.

is a wonderful great Man, and good as great. Lord Nelson will certainly *think* more in a minute than *most* men will do in an hour. Between him and my last plodding Lord no line can be drawn. I have answered your Confidential communication on the agency to Mr. Creed, for the reasons therein mentioned, which will show you how much pressed his Lordship is on that subject ; and really, without departing from the strictest line of truth, I may add against his inclination, for to you none has the preference of real esteem in his mind ; but repeated requests from a certain quarter have certainly made him determine as I have said, and much distressed am I at it. One thing I am sure, that your honourable and disinterested conduct has enhanced his regard, and it will pain him to the heart to act as it appears he must. The circumstances of this subject will of course be buried in oblivion.

“ I trust you have heard from Captain Gore respecting the Carpet, and that you will be so good as to let me know if there is anything not accomplished in the commission, that I may use my endeavours to do the needful. Captain Schomberg is still in the *Madras* tho' his Lordship desires much to remove him ; the truth is, none of the Enemy's Ships will come out. I have only to repeat what my heart will ever with pride and pleasure acknowledge—its gratitude for your goodness, and with every wish for your happiness remain, Dear Sir,

“ Your sincere and faithful Friend,

“ JOHN SCOTT

“ WILLIAM MARSH, ESQ.”

Mr. Creed was a partner in the firm of Marsh, Page, Creed, & Co., Berners St., with whom Nelson banked usually, and this letter is chiefly in reply to a private question as to how Mr. Davison came to be agent for the Nile prizes when they considered they had a prior right to the business.

The next letter, which was written by Lord Nelson to his banker, Mr. Marsh, in London, contains much matter of interest. It refers to the Nile prizes, and the description of Bronte is the most hopeful ever written by Nelson.

"OFF MALTA, Feb 27, 1804.¹

"MY DEAR SIR,—Your letters of Nov^r only arrived this day, and I have only a moment to return an answer. I am truly sensible of the uniform kindness of your House and of yourself in particular, and whoever you choose to take into it will always be approved of by me. Could I see you for five minutes you would be satisfied of the reason why the Nile Prizes could not be put into your hands. I have, believe me, the very highest opinion of your honor and integrity. I thank you for all your kindness to me. How long I may be here is impossible to say; it may depend on the way I am treated independent of my state of health, which is very far from good. All my money I have full confidence you will lay out to the best advantage. I care not for money myself but as it may be useful to my friends, and it is this alone which drains my pocket. In two or three years Bronte will be at full £3,000

¹ In possession of the Misses Marsh-Caldwell.

sterling a year, but it has been so oppressed [through] belonging to the great hospital at Palermo that it requires time to bring about. It is my determination to bring about a Prophecy that Bronte is to be called 'the happy.' Every appointment in church and state is mine, and my will pretty near constitutes the law. I am sure it does the happiness or misery of 14,000 poor people. Most probably I shall some day reside there. I shall have pleasure executing your commissions for the Carpet and Minorca honey. I beg my very best respects to your worthy Father Mr. Marsh, Mr. Stracey, and all our friends in Berners St. I felt Mr. Sibbalds goodness in his Illumination of Sunning Hill, and do you, my dear Sir, believe me for life your obliged friend,

"NELSON AND BRONTE.

"WM MARSH, ESQ^r."

We know Lord Nelson entertained the idea of residing at Bronte before he bought Merton, for when in the *Baltic* in March 1801 he wrote a letter to Lady Hamilton, one line of which was that he would like to see her and Sir William before he went to Bronte. Again, when she was looking out furniture he wrote that she need not be particular, as it might be sold or go to Bronte.

The estate was a sad disappointment, and Nelson wrote to Acton to ask the King to take it back; but Acton did not like to do so. It was only the year he died that it paid its way.

Just at this time Mr. Davison was suffering a term

of twelve months' imprisonment in the Marshalsea for bribery at Ilchester election, on hearing of which Lord Nelson remarked to Lady Hamilton, June 27th, 1804 :
‘ I am not surprised at the time poor Davison is to be confined after what passed in Parliament. I did not expect so little, and I fear he has a very heavy fine to pay besides. He would only consult Lord Moira, and such clever folks, but an ignoramus like me could only warn him not to touch Boroughs. He has, poor fellow, been completely duped, and who cares ? Not one of those great folks. I am most sincerely sorry for him, but a year will soon pass away. Have not I been shut up in a ship without any one comfort ? He is ashore with his friends round him, and even you go to see him.”

The friendship between Lord Nelson and Mr. Davison dated from 1782, when, at Quebec, young Nelson was about to wreck his career by making an unwise offer of marriage to a beautiful Canadian ; but the interference of Mr. Davison, who got him back to his vessel, prevented this, and he soon won Nelson's gratitude and confidence. Mr. Davison died at Regency Square, Brighton, in his eightieth year, on December 10th, 1829, after a short illness.

Nelson was most observant of meritorious conduct, and prompt to mention such to the powers who could reward it. Many times he failed to obtain the recognition his courage deserved, but he was fortunate in attracting notice on behalf of others whose efforts deserved special praise. For instance, there is the case of Mr. Edward Gayner. Writing to Mr. William



Lynedoch

SIR THOMAS GRAHAM, BARON LYNEDOCHE, G.C.B.

Painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence.

Marsden of the Admiralty, April 22nd, 1804, Nelson says he wishes him to acquaint the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that, in addition to Mr. Edward Gayner's honest and honourable dealings in supplying the fleet with wine, and other necessary refreshments, which could be procured from no other person at Rosas, every officer in the squadron was under obligation to him for transacting their private commissions, and other services without hope of reward; he therefore begged that some consideration be shown to Mr. Gayner for his great exertions in the public cause.

Upon the same day he addressed himself to Earl St. Vincent:—

*"Victory, April 22, 1804."*¹

"MY DEAR LORD,—I think if the Admiralty was to present Mr. Gayner, who is a Quaker, with a Silver Cup value £100, that it would have a good effect, and be much more acceptable than any sum of money.

"I am not very stout to-day, but am always, my Dear Lord, most faithfully yours,

"NELSON AND BRONTE."

The Admiralty acted upon Nelson's suggestion, and rewarded Mr. Edward Gayner with a silver cup, value one hundred guineas, made by Messrs. Rundell.

In like manner did he apply on behalf of any deserving officer. As an instance take his application

¹ In possession of Frederick Barker, Esq.

to Lord St. Vincent that Captain Hoste's abilities should be recognised :—

" Victory, Oct. 12, 1804.¹

" MY DEAR LORD,—I interest myself very much that Captain Hoste should have a frigate. I beg you to give him one, and I pledge myself that he will do honour in the Command of her to your Lordship and to me and to our Country, and your kind compliance will most truly oblige your most faithful Servant,

" NELSON AND BRONTE."

Captain Hoste was son of the Rev. Dixon Hoste, Godwick Hall, Rougham, Norfolk, to whom Nelson had written on November 18th, 1800, from his lodgings in Dover Street, where he and Lady Nelson took apartments on his arrival in England :—

" Many thanks for your kind letter. Your Son deserved more than I could give him. He ought to have been Post, and would long since had I retained the Command. He will do me and the Service credit in whatever situation he is placed. Excuse this short line, and with my best Comp^{ts} to Mrs. Hoste believe me

" Your most obedient Servant,

" NELSON OF THE NILE."

The following letter to Lord St. Vincent, though no novelty, is so good a specimen of Nelson's determination that none should be wronged if he could avert it, and that man should act rightly to man, that

¹ In possession of Frederick Barker, Esq.

it is inserted to show the trouble he personally took to defend and replace one whom he thought had been deprived of his situation wrongfully.

"MY LORD,¹—I have been much distressed at finding that Mr. Thomas Fellowes, who served with me as Purser during the whole time I commanded the *Agamemnon*, has not only lost his appointment of Purser to H.M.S. *Superb* owing to an arrest for Debt, but is invalided, with a wife and family in the most abject misery, without the slightest means of support for them or for himself. The enquiries I have made of his Agents, and my own opportunities of observation while he was under my Command, leave not a shadow of doubt upon my mind but that the Pecuniary Embarrassments which are the source of this distress are not the result of extravagance or misconduct in the discharge of his duty; and indeed, speaking from my own knowledge, I can safely say that Mr. Fellowes is a man of strictly honest principles, and that I believe his losses to be chiefly owing to the want of integrity, or to the negligence, of those who were entrusted with his Concerns in the Ship at those Periods when he was absent on duty as Commissary to the Troops and Seamen serving on shore at Corsica. I should not preface the request I am about to make to your Lordship with this detail but that I am anxious your compliance with it should proceed not less from attention to my recommendation, than from motives of Justice and Humanity towards

¹ In possession of Frederick Barker, Esq.

an unfortunate Sufferer in the Service, on the part of your Lordship.

"A Vacancy I understand is likely to occur very shortly in the Clerk of the Cheques office, at Chatham, by the resignation of Mr. F^r Smith of the Clerks. I shall feel sensibly obliged by your Lordship appointing Mr. Fellowes to it, and I will pledge myself that his abilities will be found equal to the occasion. The salary, though small, will be adequate to his support, and to a man wholly without Pecuniary Resources it will be far preferable to another Warrant as Purser.

"I shall only add, my Lord, that I feel much interested in Mr. F., and that I am," etc., etc.¹

His incessant appeals to the Admiralty to right wrongs, or obtain reward for merit, or pensions for those injured in service, provoked Troubridge to say that if he asked for any more favours he should have none granted.

Equally anxious was Lord St. Vincent that no man should be defrauded of just rights. Many meritorious persons came under Nelson's cognisance, and when he found himself unable to obtain the requested promotion, he broke out into irritable expressions that his recommendations were rejected, as personal affronts to himself. That this was not so, and that Lord St. Vincent may be shown as most properly inquiring before bestowing a situation, we may quote from a

¹ Endorsed "Not complied with," as the Clerks in the office rose according to seniority, and it was imperative that the first Clerk understood every branch of the business.

letter he wrote to Commissioner Saxton, July 20th, 1801.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Anxious and desirous as I am to put the dock yards upon the best possible footing, the first measure I think most important is to appoint the most capable men in all respects to the employments of master shipwrights, without attention to seniority or influence of any kind ; and having heard the most favourable report of those now at Portsmouth yard, I am much disposed to prefer them. Pretensions are got up in favour of Mr. Nelson of Deptford yard because he is a senior, which (unless his merits are of a very superior kind) I cannot admit as a justifiable plea. This latter person as well as Mr. Polhill has served under your eye, and I will thank you for your undisguised opinion upon their merits, being well aware how difficult it is to obtain a precise knowledge of the real abilities of men to fill responsible situations, from those under whom they have been educated." A most honest discharge of duty.

The following is a letter from Nelson to Admiral Lutwidge :—

" Victory, May 24th, 1804.¹

"MY DEAR ADMIRAL,—Many many thanks for your kind letter of April 3rd, and I beg you will thank good Mrs. Lutwidge for hers, for in truth by one conveyance I can only write to one in a house, and both your letters arrived the same day by the *Leviathan*. You are sure that I shall always be happy

¹ In possession of the Misses Poole, Alsager.

in paying attention to your recommendations and shall certainly see Mr. Baker, but I have not the smallest chance of being useful to him, for it is not *two* French fleets that will clear the way of what are on the Admiralty and My List. I think the Admiralty has had a hard run, and if Pitt goes on I do not think my friend Addington can stand the united parties of Pitt and Fox. Our dear Lady Hamilton for ever speaks of your and Mrs. L^{re} kindness to her; her good heart is feelingly alive to such acts. Our Ships have been very unfortunate latterly; the loss of *Apollo* and Convoy is shocking. Off Brest I am only surprised more are not lost, or rather that any are saved. I am truly sorry for your nephew, for I see no prospect of an Exchange of prisoners with the Republick; but the new Emperor may think differently, and I should not be surprised if we have a speedy Peace, for he must want to settle firmly his new Dignity. *Bravo, Corsican!* When you write to Kingsmill remember me kindly to him, and make acceptable my most sincere good wishes to Mrs. Lutwidge and that she may never be ill, and Believe me, my Dear Admiral, that I am for ever your most grateful and obliged Friend,

“NELSON AND BRONTE.

“I sent Dutton his letter and have since seen him.”

On May 30th, 1804, Nelson wrote to his medical adviser, Dr. Moseley, about his own continued ailments, under which it is surprising he was able in any way to devote attention to the divers duties of Commander,

all of which he so conscientiously performed, entering even into the most minute details connected with matters economical, so thoughtful was he in everything, and so honest.

*"Victory, May 30, 1804."*¹

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have many thanks to give you for your truly kind letter of Jan^y 24th. From what we hear of Bonaparte's being Emperor, perhaps it will bring about a peace, and if we give up Malta it will be necessary to make a naval hospital. I have sent Dr. Snipe to look at the place with Sir Alexander Ball, and to take care that we have the ground with the house; for with the ground it is the most healthy and eligible situation in Vallette Harbour; without it, confined with the 4 bare walls, it would be the very worst place in the place, for the heat would be intolerable. And I have too often found that sea officers when they are out of the immediate line of their profession forget and are negligent of poor Jack.

"The health of the fleet cannot be exceeded, and I really believe that my shattered carcase is in the worst plight of the whole fleet. I have had a sort of rheumatic fever, they tell me, but I have felt the blood gushing up the left side of my head, and the moment it covers the brain I am fast asleep. I am now better of that, and with violent pain in my side and night sweat with the heat in the evening and quite flushed; that pain in my heart nor spasms I

¹ In possession of J. C. Holding, Esq.

have not had for some time. Mr. Magrath, who I admire for his great abilities every day which I live, now gives me camphor and opium. But we must lose such men from the service if the army goes on encouraging medical men while we do nothing. I am sure much ought to be done for our navy surgeons, or how can we expect to keep valuable men? I look to you not only to propose it but enforce it to Lord St. Vincent, who must be anxious to preserve such a valuable set of men in the navy.

"With every kind wish for your health and happiness, I am always, my Dear Doctor,

"Your much obliged friend,

"NELSON AND BRONTE.

"I wish it may be in my power to be useful to your friend Hammick on board the *Renown*, but I see no prospect at present."

Of the many true friends of Lord Nelson, Mr. Davison was among the most devoted. Lord Nelson in 1804 owed him £3,800, but Mr. Davison wrote him not to think of it, for if it never was paid it was nothing to him. To Lady Hamilton on September 22nd, 1804, he wrote about some lottery tickets, ending with a beautiful expression of fidelity to his absent friend :—

"MY DEAR LADY,—Ever obedient to your *lawful* commands I have implicitly obeyed your orders in the purchase this morning of Messrs. Branscomb & Co. of four quarter lottery tickets—

No. 593,
10,376
14,381,
20,457.

Each, I hope, will come up a prize and be entitled to receive at least on the whole twenty thousand pounds. I paid eighteen pounds eight shillings for them, and I have written upon the back of each 'Property of Lord Nelson, 22 September, 1804.'

"So that I know my Hero of Heroes is well, I care the less about letters, knowing that writing, delivering, or receiving them will not, either in him or me, make the least alteration or lessen our attachment or affection."

In November, 1804, a letter to Mr. Matcham from Lord Nelson accounts for the non-receipt of letters. "My last letters having been sent back from *Rose* [ship], not suffered to be landed assures me that we are at war with Spain, but I have not a word from our Minister at Madrid upon the subject. God knows what the Admiralty mean to do with me, but if I stay much longer I should not much like to arrive in the very depth of winter, and I hardly think my shattered constitution would stand such a shock." His health and declining eyesight were great afflictions, as he further confided to Mr. Matcham. "Although I have not been ill, yet the constant anxiety I have experienced has shook my weak frame, and my rings will hardly keep upon my finger; and what grieves me more than all is that I can every month perceive a visible, (if I may be allowed the expression,) loss

of sight ; a few years must, as I have always predicted, render me blind. I have often heard that Blind people are cheerful, but I think I shall take it to heart ; however, if I am so fortunate as to gain a great Victory over the Enemy, the only favour I shall ask will be for permission to retire, and if the contrary, I sincerely pray that I may never live to see it. But I have done with this *triste* subject."

Again and again he longed for rest, and to his brother-in-law he frequently urged his desire in such sentences as "I have but one object in view to them, to find the French fleet, and to beat them soundly ; and then all the reward I shall ask is to be allowed to come to England, for this constant wearing of the mind must shake my constitution, but some happy day I doubt not I shall be amply repaid. We are very healthy and very unanimous, but nearly all the Fleet were perfect strangers to me, and therefore I can expect no particular marks of private friendship."

Nelson had found things much changed in Naples. The Hamiltons' house had been converted into an hotel. A pension allowed by Sir William Hamilton to an old retainer, had ceased when the Hon. Charles Greville inherited his uncle's property, and other items of interest were sent to the ex-Ambassadress. Nelson's own estate at Bronte was in every way mismanaged by those in whose custody he left it : the unauthorised expenditure upon the house and on charities, given in his name without his sanction angered him, as the incoming funds from the property were far below what was necessary for such outlays.

He desired to resign Bronte, and had begged Sir John Acton to intimate his wish to the King of Naples. He was surprised to find that his request had never been laid before his Sicilian Majesty, Sir John Acton saying he dare not do so.

On October 18th, 1804, Nelson presented to the church at Madalena a cross, and pair of silver candlesticks, in token of the hospitable treatment which the fleet under his command had received from the inhabitants.

The furniture and linen which had been left packed in cases at Palermo by the Hamiltons he ordered to be opened, dried, repacked, and forwarded to Lady Hamilton. They had a narrow escape of falling into the hands of the French.

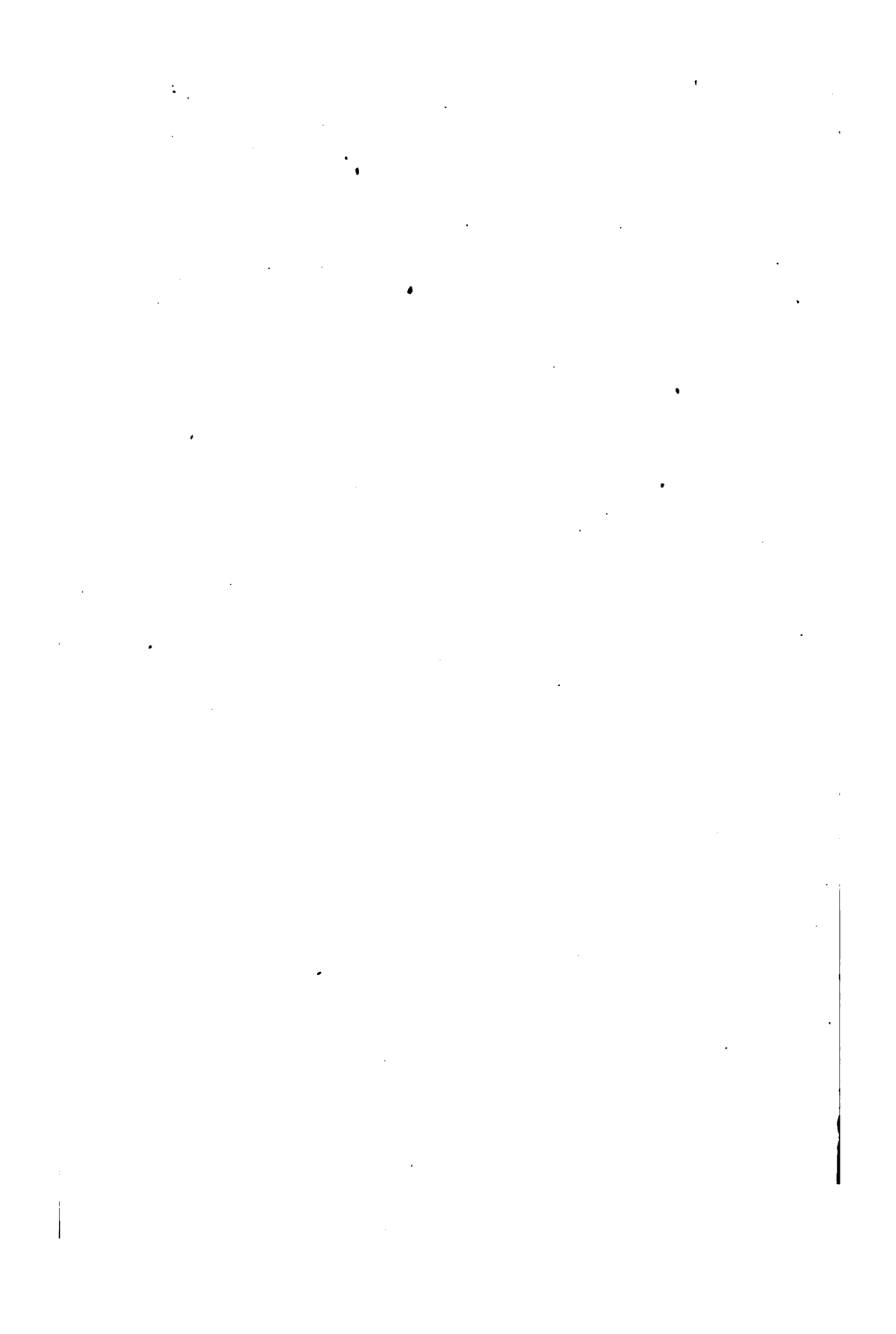
A number of French privateers were cruising south of Sicily, and Mr. Abraham Gibbs, the agent of Lord Nelson for the Bronte estate, who had been commissioned to see to the transfer of the goods to England, foresaw that the vessel in which they were placed might be captured : he therefore ordered their removal at Girgenti. The vessel was seized in returning to Malta, but fortunately Lady Hamilton's effects were saved, owing to the forethought of Mr. Gibbs.

On December 30th, 1804, Lord Nelson wrote that he had on Christmas Day received Lady Hamilton's letter giving him an account of her long expedition into Norfolk to his relations—the Christmas Day on which he wrote that, save for the events which had detained him with the fleet, "I had devoted to spend with you and our dear adopted Horatia at dear Merton."

"Our dear *adopted* Horatia"! An important admission. It was habitual to Nelson in recommending any young midshipman who had been trained with him to mention him as "my child." The frequency of its occurrence deprives the use of it, in connection with Horatia, of any literal meaning; the introduction of the word *adopted* into a private letter to Lady Hamilton is of far more value.

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